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METHODISM:
ITS MESSAGE FOR TO-DAY

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The Proceedings

OF THE

METHODIST CHURCH CONGRESS

HELD IN

VICTORIA HALL, SHEFFIELD

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FOREWORD

THE early Methodist preachers were content to be known as ' Preachers of the gospel.' They had a divine message. This had a distinctive evangelical note. It offered a free, full, present salvation. This salvation was the need of each and the privilege of all. The divine energies released in its proclamation created the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. The vital experience of personal religion brought to birth through the Methodist Message, with its corporate expression in the joy of Christian fellowship, restored to the religious life of the period something of the reality and authority of the religion of the New Testament. For ' evangelical ' is not the shibboleth of a Church party ; it is, rather, the catholic symbol of the ' grace of God which hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.'

The Congress was born of a deep conviction that God is leading a reunited Methodism to a fresh interpretation of this same essential quality of the Methodist Message into the common thought of our generation, in order that it may be declared again with power and with the accent of certainty in the living speech of to-day. Because the Message is profoundly evangelical it is truly ethical. It is also as surely sacramental as it is effectually evangelical. At the same time, it meets the insistent demand that a vital religion for to-day must express itself in personality rather than in abstract ideas.

For these reasons the ruling idea of the Congress may be stated thus :

EVANGELICAL RELIGION IS BASED UPON PERSONAL VALUES AND REALIZED IN PERSONAL RELATIONS.

The subjects selected to expound this unity occasioned much concern. They were chosen as the outcome of prolonged and prayerful meditation. They are such as seem most likely to present the authentic emphasis of the Message of Methodism at this crisis of her history, and amidst the complex movements of life and thought in the modern world. The ideal cherished for the Congress was that these subjects might be pondered reverently, and as in the atmosphere of a religious 'Retreat,' graciously diffused through speech and silence. For this reason the arrangements for each session included careful provision for corporate prayer, praise, and silence.

A separate devotional service was prepared for each session, and the use of the litanies of devotion was very helpful and impressive. The incorporation of these services from *Hymns and Devotions* in this volume will enable readers to see the place they occupied in each session, and may serve to recall to members of the Congress the sure experience of the manifest presence of God in which the addresses, which blended with the silence and the prayers, were heard and pondered.

The Congress assembled in Sheffield. It included about 1,200 representatives of the three Methodist communions, from an area bounded by York, Grimsby, Worcester, Birmingham, Leicester, Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, and Leeds. Visitors attended each session and there were three crowded evening meetings. In addition, the influence of the Congress was spread farther afield by services held in some of the Sheffield churches, and by evening meetings held in neighbouring towns.

This volume is offered to the public in the belief that the effort of the Congress to interpret the Methodist Message into the common thought of our generation deserves a permanent record. It is hoped that the book may prove useful—as a text-book and devotional

guide—to Guilds and Study Circles, and that Class Meetings, Brotherhoods, and Bible Classes may find in it some inspiration and stimulus.

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable help given to us by officers of the Bristol Congress, and, in particular, that of the Rev. Frederic Platt, M.A., D.D.

G. H. Baron Hay, *Chairman of Executive.*

E. Goldthorpe
A. S. Lyne
A. W. Massey
G. W. Potter
} *Programme Secretaries.*

P. M. Medcraft
E. Eccleston Potts
J. H. Rodda
} *General Secretaries.*

OPENING SESSION

Sacramental Service conducted by
G. H. Baron Hay, M.A., B.D.
Wesleyan Methodist Church

Communion Address by
T. Ferrier Hulme, M.A., LL.D.
Wesleyan Methodist Church

At the opening session of the Congress the delegates renewed their vows at the Lord's Table. Sacramental observance is unquestionably an essential element in the Methodist Message. John Wesley organized his people on the basis of a Sacramental Society. The early Methodists were both evangelical and sacramental in a remarkable degree. The religious issues of the present hour make it of great importance that evangelical religion should preserve intact the true and scriptural relation between the preaching of the Word and its supreme historical symbol—the Lord's Supper. It is fitting, therefore, that the subject of the Communion Address should be 'Evangelical Religion: The Life of God in the Soul of Man.' Stress must be laid upon the reality of religion as direct personal experience of the grace of redemption in Christ Jesus through the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart of the believer. Naturally this evangelical experience will stand in contrast with the sacerdotal claims, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the stress frequently laid upon the Christian religion as intellectual assent to credal authority. It will also assume that personality is the most sacred fact discoverable in the ordered universe, and that, for evangelical religion, ultimate Reality is personal, rather than rational. The historical Jesus, 'the image of the invisible God,' has become for us the indwelling Christ of evangelical experience. The Presence, always discoverable in the midst, wheresoever two or three are gathered together in His name, becomes for us, at the Lord's Table, the 'Real Presence' indeed, presiding still at the Feast, and most surely 'known in the breaking of bread,' to all penitent and believing souls.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Branscombe.'

JESU, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood ;
Thou savest those that on Thee call ;
To them that seek Thee Thou art good,
To them that find Thee, all in all.

We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still ;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast ;
Glad when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay ;
Make all our moments calm and bright ;
Chase the dark night of sin away ;
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

PRE-COMMUNION SERVICE.

LET US SING :

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face ;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven ;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song ;
This is the heavenly table spread for me ;
Here let me feast, and, feasting, still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with Thee.

THE ADMINISTRATION.

Too soon we rise : the symbols disappear ;
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone ;
The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here,
Nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

I have no help but Thine ; nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon ;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed ;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to the glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

POST-COMMUNION SERVICE.

LET US SING :

Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.

I ask them whence their victory came ;
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.

Once they were mourners here below,
And poured out cries and tears ;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast ;
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest.

Our glorious Leader claims our praise
For His own pattern given ;
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to heaven.

BENEDICTION.

I

THE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

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The purpose of the first full session of the Congress is to reassert, in a new setting it may be, but with the old emphasis and conviction, the spiritual fact which has always been fundamental in Methodist teaching and experience : ' Thou, O Christ, art all I want.' Christianity is Christ. He is Himself the gospel. ' I and my Father are one,' ' Ye are complete in Him,' ' Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

It is asserted that comparatively few people, even in a Christian community, cherish a truly Christian idea of God.

Amongst the rank and file of Christian men and women there is heard a sincere and reverent question, What is God like ? No satisfying answer to this wistful inquiry can be given by enumerating a group of metaphysical attributes such as are often assumed to constitute the nature and character of God. Nor can it be sufficient to recite the descriptions of God which occur in the Old Testament. God, whether as Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver, Redeemer, is everywhere and always like Jesus Christ in character and purpose. That is the only essentially Christian answer. In Him as nowhere else, in Him alone, God's character, gracious love, and eternal purpose are revealed. The Christlikeness of God, therefore, is the only truly evangelical conception of the character of God.

Moreover, Jesus is not only the supreme Revealer of God ; He is also Himself the supreme Revelation of God. Every Scripture finds its spiritual value as it reveals His mind and expresses His spirit. He is thus the Standard and Judge of that which is the authentic Word of God. Whatever is not in harmony with His mind and spirit, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, is not specifically Christian, and must be so discriminated as we interpret the progressive revelation enshrined in Holy Scripture. Thus, recognizing varying moral and spiritual values in the Bible, we shall recognize also that critical study of the sacred book has not displaced, but, rather, enhanced, the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ as Lord of the Scripture, even as He is ' Lord of the Sabbath.'

To consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession has come to be regarded as the commonplace of evangelical religion. But ideas of His Saviourhood have been worn trite. No truth in the evangelical faith and preaching is in greater need of a quickening and enriching vitality than the doctrine of the Cross.

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN :

Tune : 'Lyngham' (Nativity).

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look unto Him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace.

See all your sins on Jesus laid:
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

The Vision of God .	John xiv. 6–11 Matt. xi. 27–30
The Word of God .	John i. 1–5 Heb. i. 1–4
The Reconciled God .	2 Cor. v. 18–21

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

Te Deum Laudamus.

Setting: Jackson.

We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship Thee : the Father everlasting.

To Thee all Angels cry aloud : the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.

To Thee Cherubin, and Seraphin: continually do cry,

Holy, Holy, Holy : Lord God of Sabaoth ;

Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty : of Thy Glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles : praise Thee.

The goodly fellowship of the Prophets : praise Thee.

The noble army of Martyrs : praise Thee.

The holy Church throughout all the world : doth acknowledge Thee ;

The Father : of an infinite Majesty ;

Thine honourable, true : and only Son ;

Also the Holy Ghost : the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory : O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son : of the Father.

When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man : Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death : Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God : in the Glory of the Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come : to be our Judge.

We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants : whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints : in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people : and bless Thine heritage.

Govern them : and lift them up for ever.

Day by day : we magnify Thee ;

And we worship Thy Name : ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord : to keep us this day without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us : have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us : as our trust is in Thee.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded.

I

CHRIST—THE REVEALER OF GOD

The deepest need of the human spirit is for God—for an assurance that He is, and for an experience of what He is. 'O that I knew where I might find Him,' cried Job, burdened with the mystery of his life, distracted rather than helped by the arguments of his friends, eager to plead his case with God and even to lay his accusations against God. In his passionate cry Job is but a type of those who are persuaded that God must be reached and known in experience if the soul's perplexities are to be resolved; for God alone can guarantee a meaning within the mystery of things, and illumine the moral purpose which is being expressed and realized in the universe which so often seems to be unmoral, if not immoral. Akin to Job's cry is Philip's request of Jesus: 'Show us the Father and it sufficeth us.' So speaking, Philip bore witness to a longing which not only lay in the hearts of disciples, but which lies in the universal heart of mankind—a longing for a clear vision of God, and an assurance that in His character and attributes God satisfies, and does not offend, the deep moral and spiritual instincts of mankind.

The passages quoted further suggest that knowledge of God comes not primarily through human search or effort—Can a man by searching find out God?—but through an act of self-disclosure on God's part. No doubt there is a human activity that corresponds with the divine condescension; man must on his part receive that which is offered, must read that which is written in nature or in history. But that, which from the human side might with a certain propriety be spoken of as man's discovery of God, is made possible

only by the prior fact that God on His side has broken the silence to give knowledge of Himself, so that whosoever has power to interpret, or has willingness to receive the revelation given, may have a knowledge of God sufficient for all the practical needs of life.

The revelation of God is given partly in nature and partly in history. A created universe must reveal at least some of the qualities and attributes of its Creator, though it may not be suited to express the whole character and purpose of the Creator. Paul's statement wins approval—' The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* His everlasting power and divinity.' Yet but little reflection is needed to discern the inadequacy of the natural revelation to meet the deep need of the human spirit. From the created universe of things one might infer intelligence and power and even purpose in the Creator. But supreme intelligence may outwit and out-manœuvre man, omnipotent power may crush him, and the thought of a purpose in the universe that is not a moral purpose may be a positively terrifying thought. What is needed if man is to be at home in the universe is evidence that supreme intelligence and power are guided by love, and work always and only in the service of a moral ideal. It is in assurances of this kind that the natural revelation is proved to be not untrue, but defective and insufficient. The revelation given in history conveys to us more of the truth about God that we especially need to know, for the life of moral and spiritual beings provides a more effective medium than mere *things* can ever be for the expression of the moral and spiritual attributes of Deity. The historical revelation is progressive. It is varied in its mode, partial in its character, and of necessity conditioned and limited by the imperfections of those through whose words and acts and personalities the

revelation is mediated. The natural and historical revelations find their crown and completion 'in one who is a son.' This at least is our Christian faith. The consistent claim of the New Testament, and of Christian experience, is that in Jesus Christ we have the authentic voice of God speaking in time, an emergence of God Himself upon the plane of human life.

'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Whether we accept that as a genuine utterance of Christ, or as a judgement of later Christian reflection, it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape its truth. Once we have glimpsed Jesus we are almost inevitably compelled to think of God in the terms of Him. Perhaps there is no more urgent need in our time than that men should have the simple courage to infer from all that Jesus was to what God is. When we trace back such thoughts of God as we have, and such faith in God as we have, to their source, we are probably amazed at the measure of our indebtedness to Jesus. We probably find that all the thoughts about God which mean most to us, all the thoughts which are most satisfying to our spirits and most relevant to our condition of need, all the thoughts by which we are greatly influenced and greatly helped in life, are the thoughts which come to us through Jesus. When Jesus says to us, 'Your Father in heaven,' He says something that is of more value to us in the actual living of our life than all the speculations and abstractions of the philosophers. To be told that God is the Absolute, the Infinite, the Eternal, the Incomprehensible, a further or a final term in an ascending scale of values, may all, in a certain sense, be true ; and no doubt such expressions are necessary in any attempt to define God in terms of pure thought. But such expressions leave the average man cold and perplexed ; they provide him with no enlightenment or empowerment for the life of the common day. How different is it when Jesus says,

'Your Heavenly Father,' 'Your Heavenly Father knows,' 'Your Heavenly Father cares.' Jesus' language may be picture language, but we immediately feel that it makes vivid and concrete truth that would otherwise remain abstract. It puts us in touch with reality, in the way in which we need to be put in touch with reality for the right living of our life. If we really grasp the truth that is presented to us under the familiar imagery of Jesus we find it easy—and perhaps inevitable—to fall in love with God; our attitude towards God becomes filial, our will is empowered for the tasks which lie within the will of God for us. When Jesus speaks of 'the Father's will,' He does more than all the reasonings and codes of the moralists can do to invest duty with authority and attractiveness, and so to bring us to the point of loving it and doing it.

It is not, however, in the teaching only of Jesus that the revelation of God lies, but rather in what Jesus Himself was. His whole personality, rather than His words, mediates the revelation to us. He inspires in us the faith that in Him we have a wholly true index to what God is, though that is not quite the same thing as saying that He is an index to the whole truth about God. We may and must believe that there are depths upon depths in God which cannot be sounded by us. But what I think we may say is that the whole truth of what God is—so far as that truth may be expressed in a genuinely human life lived under completely human conditions—was expressed in Jesus, and that such knowledge of God as is essential for the perfecting of mankind was made accessible in Jesus. As we look into the face of Jesus we become aware of the shining of God's own face. We are constrained to believe that the quality of Jesus' spirit is the quality of God's very self; and that the knowledge of God which is mediated to us in the words and life of Jesus is wholly true, in the sense that we shall never have to unlearn it, but are

under a constant obligation to appropriate it more completely and to develop a finer sensitiveness to all its implications.

The specific knowledge which Jesus mediates to us is the knowledge of God as holy love. Holiness, love, love triumphant through sacrifice—these are the attributes which must find a place in God if He is to command man's trust, obedience, and love, and these are the attributes revealed in Jesus. There is something awesome and yet attractive in the holiness of Jesus. His mind and attitude towards sin were so completely the ideally right mind and attitude towards it. His was the mind that utterly condemned and repudiated sin ; His the attitude of utter aloofness from sin. This mind and attitude were expressed and maintained throughout His life and death. At no point is there any suggestion of a compromise with evil. By the exercise of His human will He was complete victor over sin, and He carried His opposition to sin and His victory over it even through the experience of death. On the other hand, His mind and attitude towards the good were the ideally right mind and attitude towards it. His mind at all times approved the good, His will without failure accepted it and did it. Such ideally right mind and attitude towards sin on the one hand and towards good on the other is the very perfection of holiness.

The wonder of Jesus' holiness is matched by the wonder of His love. Was ever love so tender, so sensitive, so discerning as His ? The last, the least, the lost were in a special sense His care. The very promise and power of reconciliation were in Him for all those outcast persons who despaired of themselves and were despised by their fellows. Every form of human need made its appeal to Him and moved Him to sympathetic ministry. A timid touch upon His garment's hem brought healing. He marked the first faint signs of

goodness in the weakest and most debased of men, saw the promise of better things beneath the accumulated evil of a life, discerned the potential saint in the sinner. With a fullness of love that cannot be measured He loved all and He loved each. He dared to say that God was love like that ; that God's love, while caring for the mighty whole of things, reached down through that complex whole to find, and lavish its wealth of tenderness and service upon, each tiniest and most insignificant thing within the whole. ' The very hairs of your head are all numbered ' ; not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice ; ' Ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

The most characteristic expression of love is sacrifice, self-giving. It is the very nature of love to seek the good of the loved at the cost of the self. Gethsemane and Calvary—the midnight agony and the cry of desolation from the cross—mark the tremendous energy of the love of Jesus and its immeasurable capacity for sacrifice. If love like this is not divine—love that so believes in man's worth that it gives all to compass his good, mounts a cross to lift him to a throne, enters the wilderness to lead him back into the warm fellowship of the Father's heart and home—where shall we find the authentic mark of the divine ?

Holy love, triumphant through sacrifice in its search of man and service of him—that is the knowledge of God which is mediated to us through Jesus. We could not by an effort of our own thought come to this knowledge. We might infer that God should be such love, conjecture or even hope that He is such love, but it takes Jesus to make us radiantly sure of the fact.

Our thought and desire in their reach out after God cannot go beyond Jesus, neither can they be content to stop short of Him. Once Jesus has been seen the question arises, Can God be as good as Jesus ? There seems so much in nature and history that challenges—

if it does not disprove—the goodness of God. Is it possible to believe, in view of all the difficulties that the belief encounters, that the ultimate fact with which we have to do is a love so perfect and unfailing as the love we see in Jesus? Yet, if we think of God in terms less than those of the Christ life and spirit, we acknowledge that there is a something higher than God—and that is but another way of saying that we are concerning ourselves with a fiction of a God rather than the real God. A God than whom a higher can be conceived is simply not God. What we gain through Jesus is not an elaborated concept of God, but a revelation of His quality. We are not enabled so to know God that we can fully understand Him, but we are enabled so to know that we can sufficiently appreciate what God is in His purposes for us and His dealings with us. Indeed, to say that Jesus mediates to us the knowledge of God is an inadequate statement of fact. It would be more adequate to say that He mediates to us God Himself. Of love so transcendent as the love of Jesus we do not say, 'This is like unto God'; rather do we say, 'This is God.' If we find God anywhere, we find Him in Jesus.

In coming to Jesus we come necessarily to God. This is the very core, as it is the vital testimony, of Christian experience. We find Him to be God within our experience of Him, because our experience which proceeds from Him is such as only God could produce, in that the essence of the experience is that we know and enjoy God, we are known and are possessed by God, the grace of God's forgiveness reaches us. Ritschl said that Christ has the value of God for the Christian, and, so long as we are content to be only religious, a value-judgement of this kind may suffice, for it provides us with a working faith whose practical consequences into life are good. But if at any time we become reflective and theological, interested in the ultimate problems

which religious experience throws up, questions are bound to arise. How is it that Christ has the value of God in the Christian's experience? Is that value real or illusory? If illusory, how is it that that value is so constantly reached—and proved—in Christian experience? If real, how can we explain the value, into what does it ground itself? Does not the acknowledgement 'has the value of God' ultimately compel the conviction 'is God,' so that Christ draws our faith, our adoration, our worship to Himself? We are here approaching the problem of the person of Christ, and are on the border of a metaphysical discussion. The metaphysical problem may be difficult, and no doubt there are many who dislike and distrust metaphysics. But is not the problem there, claiming attention and demanding solution?

The metaphysical problem of the person of Christ is not, however, our present concern. Our concern is rather with the religious value of Jesus, and with the demand He makes upon the faith and loyalty of men. There can be no Christianity without a faith and loyalty centred upon Christ; nor can there be the full fruit of Christianity apart from a loyalty given to Christ as to God Himself. Theories about the person of Christ have their place, and in their place are necessary. Men must—and will—speculate. But we have to insist that men need not postpone their loyalty to Christ until they have solved to their entire satisfaction the last problem that His person presents. They can take Christ as divine, and can live to that thought of Him. If the objection be raised that this is to begin with an act of faith, we would reply that the Christian life does go back for its origin upon just such an act of faith as this; that this venture upon Christ is not merely prompted by, but is in some deep sense justified by, all that history enables us to know about Jesus; and that in the unfolding of the Christian experience the conviction

deepens that in this matter the highest faith is the highest reason too. 'Believe in God, believe also in Me,' is the challenge that comes to all. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Here we touch a vital truth for Christian experience. That experience results from a faith which is not so much an intellectual assent or consent given to formulated truth, as it is passionate loyalty to, and trust in, a person who, explain it as we will, has the value of God for men. Cut that nerve, abandon that faith, and the Christian life becomes anaemic and impoverished, a pale shadow of what it might be. We ask that men shall live to Christ as though He were divine.

J. T. Brewis.

PRAYER :

O God Who art above all, yet in all ; Who art holy beyond all our knowing, yet Friend of sinners ; Who dwellest in the light that no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen or can see, yet dost condescend to lead us through the shadows of our mortal life, we bless Thee that Thou hast unveiled the light of the knowledge of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. We wait in Thy Presence to wonder at Thy grace ; and we worship Thee now with solemn joy.

We thank Thee that Thou hast gathered Thy light into a Life so near to our own that we can be sure of Thy nearness to us and to our children. We commemorate His holy nativity, His lowly toil, the deep compassion of His heart, His love for the outcast ; His crown of thorns, the cruel cross, the open shame; and we rejoice to know that, as He was here on earth, so Thou art eternally. Praise be unto Thee, O Lord Most High. Amen.

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Lubeck.'

Christ, of all my hopes the ground,
Christ, the spring of all my joy,
Still in Thee may I be found,
Still for Thee my powers employ.

Let Thy love my heart inflame,
Keep Thy fear before my sight,
Be Thy praise my highest aim,
Be Thy smile my chief delight !

When affliction clouds my sky,
And the wintry tempests blow,
Let Thy mercy-beaming eye
Sweetly cheer the night of woe.

When new triumphs of Thy name
Swell the raptured songs above,
May I feel a kindred flame,
Full of zeal, and full of love !

Life's best joy, to see Thy praise
Fly on wings of gospel light,
Leading on millennial days,
Scattering all the shades of night !

Fountain of o'erflowing grace,
Freely from Thy fullness give ;
Till I close my earthly race,
May I prove it Christ to live !

Firmly trusting in Thy blood,
Nothing shall my heart confound ;
Safely shall I pass the flood,
Safely reach Immanuel's ground.

Thus, O thus, an entrance give
To the land of cloudless sky ;
Having known it Christ to live,
Let me find it gain to die !

II

CHRIST—THE LORD OF THE SCRIPTURES

'THEY have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' Such was the lament of one who knew Jesus after the flesh, but did not yet know the risen Christ, who was to be the pioneer and perfecter of the faith of such as were prepared to follow Him in the realm of the Spirit. To-day the same distressful cry is raised by many who tremble lest the fearless searching of the Scriptures which has been going on for some years past may prove in the end to have robbed them of the dear lineaments and the well-known voice of their Saviour. We may well sympathize with those who, weak in faith, cling to the familiar and traditional, and shrink from the adventure to which each new age is called. For every adventure of faith has its risks, and there are those who lose their bearings and make shipwreck of faith. But, like the unnamed author of the epistle that tells us that Jesus was the crowning revelation of Him who spoke of old to the fathers 'by divers fragments and in divers forms,' we say, 'We are not of them that shrink back unto perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.'

We therefore accept the simple principle that our very reverence for the truth which we have learnt from the Bible demands that we should study the ancient library of sacred literature with the same scrupulous regard for literary and historical method, and for the laws of evidence, as we should exercise in any other inquiry into the records of the past. Now this is just what has been done for more than a generation by the best biblical scholars of this and many other lands. No religious literature has ever been subjected to so rigorous and minute a scrutiny as have been the Old and New

Testaments. At times one has winced when scientific thoroughness has seemed to out-distance religious sympathy, and incisive logic has been allowed to forget the value of spiritual insight. Nevertheless, the Bible has come forth from the ordeal a new book, and those who are best able to form a judgement assure us that never before was it so rich in religious value, because now we can more clearly see how to distinguish the essential religious message of the Bible from the temporal and local conceptions with which this was so often mingled.

The question, however, that disturbs many minds is this : How is the position of our Lord Jesus Christ affected by all these adjustments that have been made in our revaluation of the several parts of the Bible? There was a time when the Bible was accepted as a closely knit unity. It was Christ who was the centre at which all the lines of narrative and prophecy converged. He was the woman's conquering seed who should bruise the serpent's head. He was the sign of which the Prophet spoke to Ahaz when he prophesied, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' Indeed, the Gospel according to St. Matthew shows how far that method of reading back into the Old Testament features in the life of Jesus could be carried in the first Christian century. And now we know that all such interpretations of Old Testament passages are a violation of sound exegesis, for it is certain that we are thus reading into the minds of the ancient writers thoughts which were alien to them, and meaningless to those for whom they were writing. But does not this destroy the value of the Old Testament, and rob it of its evangelical savour? It is as though a mosaic of priceless beauty had been taken to pieces, and reset to form a geometrical design of faultless mathematical precision, where once the figure of a Saviour shone forth, with a nimbus

around His head. This would indeed be an act of vandalism. But it is one thing to deny that the earthly life of our Lord was so arranged as to correspond minutely with Old Testament prophecies in the sense of a predestined fulfilment, and another matter to dismiss the Old Testament as unrelated to Christ. For one thing, it is a fact of history that for nineteen centuries the Church has quarried deeply in the Old Testament for the liturgical language of Christian devotion, and, apart altogether from the correct interpretation of ancient texts in their original and appropriate context, by the force of long and sacred association these passages have attached to themselves a value in the experience of the community and of the individual soul that is independent of their primary meaning. Every student knows that the Song of Songs is a beautiful but rather voluptuous Oriental love-song. No one will ever again attempt the long-discarded allegorical interpretation. Yet Christian devotion will still, without any sense of incongruity, speak of our Lord as 'the fairest among ten thousand' and 'the altogether lovely.' Charles Wesley's matchless paraphrase of the Shepherd Psalm begins with words drawn from the Johannine allegory of the Good Shepherd, and who will dispute his right so to interpret the Psalm in the light of an identification by which countless Christians have started upon the last stage of their pilgrimage, 'unappalled by guilty fear'? It would be the height of pedantry for the biblical critic to object to the evangelical application which is given to the fortieth of Isaiah, the seventh of Isaiah, and the nineteenth of Job in Handel's *Messiah*. For, though faithful exposition of such words in their original context would not bring us to Bethlehem, or to the garden with the empty tomb, yet their place in our remembrance is due to the part they have played in the life of the Christian community. Indeed, just as Bach captured Hassler's chorale for his

Passion Music, and Mendelssohn goes back to Nicolai for the 'Sleepers, Wake!' chorus in *St. Paul*, so the New Testament itself caught up stray melodies from here and there in the literature of the Hebrew people and gave them a far grander setting in the sonorous music of the Christian gospel.

But there is a second and even stronger justification for the Christian use of the Old Testament. It was the devotional manual and religious text-book of Jesus Christ. Its language leapt to his lips in hours of temptation and of mortal agony. He turned to it for illustrations in argument and instruction. But how amazing is the insight that showed such keen discrimination in the use of the ancient Scriptures! Modern theology is fond of speaking of the 'progressive revelation' of God in Scripture, or of the Old Testament as a record of the 'progressive discovery' of God by the Hebrew people. Perhaps the course of discovery was a zigzag path rather than a steady advance. In any case, we can only marvel at the way in which Jesus, with unerring selective judgement, went straight to the heart of the prophetic Scriptures, leaving on one side the tangle of prescriptive ordinances, and on the other the whole system of priestly religion. In the Law it is Deuteronomy that He most often quotes, that more spiritual revision of the law in the light of the great prophetic revival of the eighth century. If He quotes from Leviticus, it is to bring forward the second great Commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' He contrasts the Mosaic law regarding marriage and divorce, and its concession to human frailty and cruelty, with the primal bliss of Eden, God's ideal type of human love fulfilled in the abiding bond of the home. Here it is not the details of the idyllic story of Genesis, but the deep principle that underlies the constitution of human nature, which Jesus brings to light. The spiritual message of the Old Testament is always

emphasized in its ethical aspect. The whole prophetic protest against the cultus divorced from morals is summed up in the twice-quoted saying of Hosea, ' I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' And if the conflict with the traffickers of the Temple courts appears to show an unexpected zeal for localized sanctity, we have only to look more closely at the words combined from the third Isaiah and from Jeremiah to recognize that the indignation was raised by all that hindered the devout prayers of the Gentiles in the one part of the Temple to which they had access, while sanctuary was offered to all the rascaldom of Jewry who chose to take refuge within their inviolable enclosure. We have thus but another instance of the paradox that He who declares that He came not to destroy but to fulfil, and who emphasizes the abiding significance of the Torah, was a reformer who preserved by destroying, who disentangled the supreme spiritual content of Law, and Prophets, and Poets from its imperfect historical setting, by casting aside all that was incongruous with His consciousness of the true nature of the Father. It is the Lord of the Scriptures who pronounces with serene authority, ' It was said to the ancients . . . but I say to you.'

There is yet a third way in which the Old Testament is indissolubly bound up with the self-revelation of God in Christ Jesus. In the earliest account which has come down to us of the baptism of Jesus the assurance of His call and commission came to Him in the words, ' Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.' No heavenly message comes to a heart that is not attuned to hear it ; but it is equally true that the voice must speak in a language that is already familiar to the listener. If these words were to Jesus a revelation of the Father's mind toward Him, they are to us also a revelation of the mind of Jesus. The significance of this declaration is that it unites the proclamation of the

first of the Messianic Psalms with the opening words of the first of the Songs of the Servant of Jehovah in the second Isaiah. 'Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.' 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles.' Now the Messianic hope, and the conception of the Suffering Servant, are two of the most exalted ideas to which the soaring imagination of Old Testament prophecy rose. It is not for us now to trace the stages by which the Hebrew passion for a righteous Kingdom of God on earth passed from the expectation of a restored Davidic monarchy to that of a catastrophic establishment of a new world-order inaugurated by the advent of a superhuman personage. The political and the apocalyptic were often found side by side in the hopes of the same generation. But as the eager expectations of the enthusiasts who returned from the exile were disappointed, and as the high hopes raised during the heroic epoch of the Maccabees were dashed to the ground during the sectarian rivalries and intrigues that disgraced the reign of their successors, the dreams of the people took more and more the form of an ideal figure. But he would reign as God's vicegerent, and his Kingdom would be maintained by irresistible might. Yet all the time later Judaism had before it that other solitary figure, so mysterious and so neglected in the popular and even in the prophetic thought of the centuries that followed the exile.

We need not try to solve the question whether the second Isaiah pictured to himself an individual, or the ideal Israel, or a nucleus of the nation, or the nation itself regarded in its aspect as the agent of God's providential purpose for the world. Whatever may have been the thought that inspired the prophet to sing these four hymns, they stood in the Book of the Prophets

bearing their witness to the idea of vicarious suffering in the service of God. It was Jesus who first formed in one indivisible unity the conception of a suffering Messiah. There is not a shred of evidence that any one else had ever given utterance to so daring a thought. The nearest approach is an Aramaic paraphrase of the fifty-third of Isaiah, possibly as early as the time of Christ, in which the Servant is identified with the Messiah, but all the pains and indignities are transferred from the Servant to the people of Israel. This only brings out into bolder relief the daring originality of our Lord in teaching the unbelievable truth that the Messiah must suffer. How deeply this teaching sank into the minds of His first disciples may be seen from the place which the Servant has in the preaching of the apostles as recorded in the early chapters of Acts. But it also gave the early Church a clue to the meaning of that otherwise most baffling enigma, the paradox of the crucified Christ. Before, however, we go on to consider the place which Jesus occupies in the rest of the New Testament, let us return to the starting-point of our examination of this astonishing discovery of Jesus—that the Messiah and the Suffering Servant are one and the same. It is at the baptism that this culmination of the brooding of the long silent years is reached. But there is yet another word which finds a place in the symbolism of the Messianic Psalm —the Son. Whatever may be the technical and official significance of that term in ancient Hebrew or Jewish thought, the whole atmosphere and content of the Gospels bears witness to the filial consciousness of Jesus. Here it is that we find the uniting bond of the other two ideas :

> But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
> Existent behind all laws, that made them, and, lo, they are!
> And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
> That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.

Yet all this assumes that in the Gospel records we have reliable evidence of the teaching of Jesus. Can this be maintained in view of all that the critical study of the Gospels has brought to light? Let it be freely granted at once that it is impossible for the intelligent and honest student of our day to treat every passage in all four Gospels as of equal historical value. Probably not a single Gospel as we have it is the actual record of an eye-witness. The Gospels were composed by honest Christian writers whose method and purpose is described by Luke in the preface to his work. They were dependent on earlier sources, written and oral. In the case of the Fourth Gospel, we recognize that the author is an interpreter who is translating sometimes the words or deeds of Jesus, sometimes his own or the Church's experience of Christ, into a new idiom which will gain for the message of the Master a more attentive hearing in the new world of Gentile religious mysticism. It may even be that the latest school of Gospel criticism is right in emphasizing the influence of the faith and life of the Church in those formative years during which the tradition was being shaped before the earliest written documents about the life or words of Jesus were published. However this may be, two facts stand out with startling clearness. The Gospels, written by very different men, do give us a portrait of one and the same Man. There is an unmistakable unity, not only in the very varied reports of the teaching, but also in the perfect congruity of words and life. The second fact is one which the newer criticism has done much to force upon our notice. Even the earliest Gospel, that by Mark, is written, not as an essay in biography, but as the proclamation of the gospel. In Mark, no less than in John, Jesus is the Son of God come with power. The once fashionable theory that in the Synoptic Gospels we see the human Jesus, wise teacher, resolute reformer, rational moralist, who was later on exalted

by the devotion of his followers to a superhuman dignity, is now universally acknowledged to be an impossible fiction. Some have tried to show that the Pauline theology had influenced Mark, and so tinged his record. But closer investigation dismisses this superficial assertion. It is clear that even before the time of Paul's reception into the Church Jesus was reverenced under the highest titles that fell within the vocabulary of Jewish piety. His disciples called him Lord. If they also called him Son of Man, Son of God, and Messiah, it seems most probable that they did so because they had learnt to do so from his own example.

Within the pages of the New Testament we find a wide variety of attempts to do justice to the supreme and unique glory of Jesus as the all-sufficient revealer of God and Saviour of men. The Cross from being a perplexity has become the open secret of divine victory through obedient suffering. Nowhere is the Christian religion proclaimed as a mere imitation of Christ. Nevertheless, the congruity between the character of Jesus and the cross as he himself interpreted it in the light of the Suffering Servant of inspired prophecy gave to the Church a new ethic. 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' and the great hymn in which Paul gives the highest lyrical expression to this conception calls to mind inevitably the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such love is redemptive, for it rises up in response to Him 'who loved me, and gave himself for me.' It is the first of the fruits of the Spirit, the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, by which also our mortal bodies are quickened. 'But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' For this is the Spirit of sonship, without which we cannot call upon God as Father. Now in the Sermon on the Mount it is the filial spirit that brings perfect trust in God, with belief in the naturalness and efficacy of prayer. That

same attitude of confidence has been brought down from the inaccessible heights of the perfect life to the common experience of the Church by the revelation of the Cross. 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' In like manner the last ringing voice of the apostolic Church declares the new commandment, not as a vague emotional ideal, but as an ethical demand which finds its seal and assurance in the cross of Christ. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'

Chief subject of the sacred book,
Thou fillest all, and Thou alone.

WILBERT F. HOWARD.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Bentley.'

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky,
We praise Thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

The Church from her dear Master
Received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifteth,
O'er all the earth to shine ;
It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are stored ;
It is the heaven-drawn picture
Of Christ, the living Word ;

It floateth like a banner
Before God's host unfurled ;
It shineth like a beacon
Above the darkling world ;
It is the chart and compass
That, o'er life's surging sea,
Mid mists, and rocks, and quick-
sands,
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.

O make Thy Church, dear Saviour,
A lamp of purest gold,
To bear before the nations
Thy true light, as of old ;
O teach Thy wandering pilgrims
By this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They see Thee face to face.

PRAYER :

We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, all-wise and all-loving, for the knowledge of Thy truth as truth is in Jesus. Grant us, we beseech Thee, grace that in times of perplexity and misgiving, when we are perplexed by new learning, when faith is strained by doctrines and mysteries beyond our understanding, we may possess the humility of learners and the courage of believers in Thee ; give us boldness to examine and faith to trust all truth ; patience and insight to master difficulties ; stability to hold fast our tradition with enlightened interpretation, to receive reverently all fresh truth made known to us, and in days of unrest to combine new knowledge with the old honesty and loyalty as in Thy sight, and graciously deliver us alike from stubborn rejection of new revelations of Thy Spirit and from hasty assurance that we are wiser than our fathers. And this we beg in the Name of Him who is Himself the Light and the Truth and the Way, even Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

III

CHRIST—THE SAVIOUR OF MAN

It will help us to be clear as to what we mean when we name Jesus the Saviour of man if we begin by watching Him doing a Saviour's work in the days of His flesh.

'To-day,' said Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus, 'is salvation come to this house.' Here was a man, grown rich in a rather mean and not too honest trade, and hardened now to the contempt of society, suddenly confronted with the grace and truth of Jesus. The pure mind of Jesus was a mirror in which, because it was itself without stain, any man might see his own defiled face, and Zacchaeus, seeing himself, cannot endure the sight. He recoiled from the life he had lived. He despised and hated it, flung off its fetters, and leaped into a new life. Jesus claimed this as His own work. '*To-day is salvation come to this house. . . . The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.*' Here is a Saviour doing a Saviour's work.

When it was charged against Him that He was dangerously free and kind with bad people, His defence was that He was a doctor, and that a doctor's place was among the sick. It was a great claim. He *could* minister to a mind diseased. He *did* profess to cure the moral trouble and change the characters of men. But His answer would have been an ineffective and irrelevant reply unless such saving work was being done in the sight of His questioners, and there were living witnesses of His skill standing by.

You remember the three parables which stand together in the fifteenth of St. Luke. Those parables —especially the story of the Prodigal Son—carry such inexhaustible significance about the deepest things that

it is possible to miss one subordinate but not unimportant feature—namely, that both by their context and their substance they appear as the explanation which Jesus gave for a sort of joyful excitement which He shared with the strange crowd then gathered about Him. This outburst of gladness was reckoned unseemly by those whose religion was a painstaking habit and the joyless worship of a distant God, and the reply of Jesus was to point to two analogies. This overflowing joy, He said, was like the joy of a shepherd who after long searching has found his lost sheep, and in his exuberance called in his neighbours to rejoice with him. And it was also like the joy that is to be found in another place, beyond men's ken, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repents. But observe again, this would have been a very unconvincing reply to his critics unless there were sinners standing there, all happy and blessed, in the new beginning which Jesus had made possible. Here was a Saviour doing a Saviour's work.

When the palsied man heard Jesus say, '*Thy sins be forgiven*,' believed what he heard, and then rose up, healed and a man again, or when the woman who was a sinner heard the absolving word, neither of them knew much of Jesus, nor could either of them have given Him what we believe to be His right name, but they knew well enough that unless the forgiveness that He spoke of was God's forgiveness, it was no forgiveness at all. But they found something in Him which enabled them to believe His word, and changed the night of their soul into day.

In instances like these we cannot analyse those quickening currents which broke in so mightily upon a bad life, to cleanse and renew—how much there was of spoken word to enlighten and persuade, and how much was just the impression of His utter truth and utter kindness, the profound effect of one personality

upon another. No doubt mostly the latter. But if we are tempted to follow the popular line and depreciate the articulate message, or to suppose that Jesus was content to let His own goodness speak for itself without further witness, and to treat His spoken message as though it were something quite secondary, a moment's reflection ought to be sufficient to correct this mistake. We have only fragments of His teaching, it is true, but the records provide almost startling evidence of the energy with which He gave Himself to the work of delivering the message. Day after day, sometimes from morning to night, with thronging crowds about Him, He never stayed, but 'spake the word unto them.' And what was the subject of all this teaching? His subject was God. You could not long listen to Jesus without being obliged to think of God, and to think of Him as never before. There has been no great religious teacher who dealt so little with abstractions as Jesus. He is concerned continually with conduct, with the practical things of everyday life; but all these, He tells us, lose their significance if we leave out God. In all our dealings with one another we are dealing with God. We get everything wrong if we ignore God. And, since the people about Him were habitually ignoring God, they made an atmosphere in which, at times, He could hardly breathe. When, on the occasion of a sudden and dangerous storm, He woke out of sleep—His holy sleep—to see the panic-stricken faces of His friends about Him, He rebuked His disciples with the words, '*Why are you such cowards? Have you not yet faith?*' And the sharpness of the rebuke reveals the pain He felt at waking into this false world that men make for themselves when they leave out God. Again, when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and from that ineffable communion with the Father, He walked suddenly into a suffocating air—a distracted father, an epileptic boy,

a wrangling company of scribes and disciples, where His own friends were playing a sorry part. Again the same cry of pain breaks from Him—'*O faithless generation.*'. They had forgotten God.

Instances such as these illustrate what is evident enough in other ways—that the nearest disciples of Jesus were quite unable to think of God as He thought, and taught. They had the advantage of receiving His message straight from His own lips (and therefore enriched and not impoverished by the personality of the speaker), and they had their great moments when shafts of welcome light broke across their darkness, and a trust in the Father something like that of Jesus gladdened their heart. But not for long. The barriers of unbelief were soon re-erected, and the habitual mood returned. Egoistic motives functioning deep in the unconscious did their work, and dragged them back to earthly levels again. They were quite unable to share His filial consciousness, and this means that they were unable to live in His world. This is what Jesus meant when He warned them that unless they were deeply changed they could not even see the Kingdom of God.

The Synoptic Gospels enable us to watch a growing conflict in the minds of His disciples. They became more and more acutely aware of the moral distance between Him and them. '*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,*' was the passionate cry of one tense moment, but the experience was more than momentary. There was something in them which recoiled from the purity of Jesus, as there was something in them which moved toward Him. A new fear of Jesus and a new love of Him struggled in their hearts. They were more and more aware of the moral incongruity between Him and them, and how little they were fit for His company. Petty rivalries, repressed ambitions, the lust of power, and the hope of selfish reward—these

mean things struggled desperately to keep their hold, and, when rebuked by Jesus, only retreated into the fastnesses of the soul to bide their time.

Many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Him, and, even of the inner circle of the twelve, one broke under the strain, and others may have come nearer to disaster than they knew. But they held to Him, or, rather, He held to them. They knew that, in spite of all the evil that lay bare to His glance, He did not repudiate them or despise them. His friendship did not weaken ; rather He gathered them the closer to Him, and spent Himself upon them without stint. When Peter had finished His denials and come to himself, he went out and wept bitterly. But we can tell what in those first hours saved him from despair. He remembered that Jesus had foreseen what would happen and forewarned him, ' and yet,' said Peter to himself, ' knowing this, He took me into the garden with Him—to see what mortal man was not worthy to see.'

They looked on Him with a deepening reverence that came near to adoration, and followed Him with a kind of dismayed affection, and when at length the Cross came, their world crashed. No hope now of earthly thrones and power and prestige—all these were gone. They hadn't a world to live in. Then came the Resurrection, and Jesus returned to them victorious over death and time. It is not possible for us to realize how tremendous must have been the effect of those moments of converse with One whom they knew had lived and died and risen again. Their hearts were set free to adore Him and to give Him the name that is above every name. They knew now that they could never lose Him, and soon they knew that the human race could never lose Him. Till then, although they knew it not, they had been trying to worship two Gods. Jesus Himself was more Godlike to them, more utterly

worthy of love, than any God they had been able to conceive. They had said their difficult prayers to God when night came, and then had lain down and fallen asleep thinking of Jesus, and the schism in their minds was never healed until at last they could give Jesus His right name and knew that there was not another and a different God to whom they were answerable. At last it was possible for them to share the filial consciousness of Jesus and to live in His world. When they looked back at the Cross in the light of the Resurrection they were able to see in it, not merely the wicked deed of wicked men, but the redeeming purpose of God. It was not, indeed, a new thing which they saw. It was the same love—the love that had refused to disown them at their unworthiest—now raised to the infinite scale. How could they have guessed that the love which persisted with unworthy friends would still persist with murderous enemies, or that on such a scale He would still give love when love was flung back in scorn? This was love without bound or limit. He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, to death on the Cross, to a grave in a garden, to an Easter resurrection—first and last, that straight line never wavered, the purpose was the same—*to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Confronted with the worst of hatred and injustice that men could offer, His answer was to burden Himself with the whole situation which sin had created, and dedicate Himself without reserve to the task of our recovery, at whatever cost. 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' was what the Cross said. What He meant then, He means now, and it could mean no more if it had all happened last night instead of 1900 years ago. And the one true response is to trust Him to do what He is pledged to do—to do a Saviour's work, to do it now, and to do it always. It is He Himself who is presented to us. We may ignore Him or respond

to Him. Or, fearing an encounter, we may postpone our response, thinking perhaps to learn more about it, to answer some further questions, to amend and tidy our lives, so as to be more ready for it ; but this is deceiving ourselves, and avoiding Him. But when we do respond, and consent to be won just as we are, then, in our Lord's word, '*Salvation has come to our house*,' and obedience will follow.

It cannot be necessary to confess one's sense of inadequacy in dealing with such a theme as 'Jesus the Saviour of Men,' and, in any case, the brief limits of the occasion forbid much addition to what I have said. If I add anything, it must be more in the nature of a personal avowal. And if any should think that the intrusion of one's personal experience at such a point is unseemly, I must plead that none of all this would have any saving value for me unless I believed that the same truth and grace are freely offered to every man.

1. Jesus Christ begins with us where we are—doubtful of the way, uncertain of God. If it is the pure in heart who see God, this condition excludes me, but it authenticates Jesus. Jesus *was* pure in heart. I am not. I have therefore every reason for suspecting my own doubtfulness and darkness, and every reason for trusting His certainty. Therefore, so far, I believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. I believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, so far, I know whom I believe. My mind cannot build God out of His attributes. I am soon lost and bewildered among infinities and eternities ; and if I try to conceive Him by putting together Goodness and Beauty and Truth, these abstractions will not long cohere in my mind, and never offer me that other One, a living God. But if Jesus is the revelation of God, and the best we can know of God is that He is

like Jesus, then I know in whom I believe, for Jesus, though He is the most inexhaustible, is also the most knowable Person in the world. He does not put me to confusion. Such a God my heart desires.

3. If I seek Him, I have not far to go. For it is not the sheep that finds the Shepherd. The Shepherd finds the sheep. His journey is begun before mine. 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'—so we read; and all our 'seeking,' which seems to us so arduous, is only our half-reluctant rising to open the door. We are disturbed because He is near. We only come because He calls. And if at last we love, it is because He first loved us and came near enough to make it known.

4. If I come, He cannot refuse me. He cannot deny Himself; He cannot deny His Cross; He will not unsay what He has said or undo what He has done. We cannot conceive of Jesus, in the days of His flesh, shutting His door against any who came for help. And He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He will not refuse me. But this is still too poor a word. He will welcome, and in that welcome all things are given—utter forgiveness first of all: '*Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. . . . All that is Mine is thine.*'

Lastly, when I come, He knows what to do with me. We do not know what to do with ourselves, but He is not baffled as we are. He knows what to do with my sins and my sinfulness; with my powers and with my weakness. He knows how to win my coldness to love, my inconstancy to steadfastness, and my ignorance to understanding. And if there be two or three of us joined in His name, He knows, in new and wider ways, what to do with that fellowship, and, if the two or three be multiplied a millionfold, He knows what to do with the fellowship of His Church, for the good of the race

He loved. He may scatter them to the ends of the earth to bear their witness, and will use them to the utmost limit of their powers to make an end of sin and wrong, but He will still be in control, for He knows what to do with us all. And, therefore, when our eyes are clearest we know we are right when we say, ' Thou, O Christ, art all I want.'

W. Russell Maltby.

HYMN :

Tune : ' All Hallows.'

None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other hiding-place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low ;
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art life, though I be dead ;
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be :
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee.

AN ACT OF ADORATION :

Let us, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

Let us glory in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ :
Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor ;
Who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
Who liveth for evermore, and hath opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers ;
Who will yet make all things new.

To Him be glory and dominion for ever.

Let us rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, by Whom we are born into the family of God, and made members of the body of Christ.

Breathe within our hearts, most Holy Spirit.

HYMN :

Tune : ' Celeste.'

This this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend ;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home ;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

BENEDICTION :

Now unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His blood, and made us to be a Kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father : to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

II

RELIGIOUS VALUES IN MAN

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The fundamental position established by the careful and reverent study of the facts brought to light by the researches of comparative religion is that religiousness is a constituent of human nature as such. Irreligious peoples, even in the lowest stages of civilization, are unknown. Man is born religious. His search for God is instinctive. He is made for contact and communion with God and is ever restless until he finds Him, or is found of Him in peace.

It is natural that such faith, in the original religious capacities and possibilities of human nature, as prevails in the thinking of modern idealists should lead to the exaltation of religious aspiration as possessing in itself the power to attain the ethical and spiritual ideals in character and conduct which are the dream and goal of human desire. These have seldom reached a higher and nobler level of ordered beauty and strength for life than they present to-day. They define and covet for man, personal and social achievements of alluring grace. They are, at times, dignified with even the name of 'religion'—the religion of art, the religion of nature, the religion of humanity. Frequently, however, these stand practically for an interpretation and manner of life that include only the natural order of things, and assume that man is capable, by obedience to his own deeper instincts, of redeeming his life from its imperfections, and the social order from its anomalies.

This view of life, at its best a religion without personal God, is rapidly becoming the practical creed of large and influential classes in every country. It provides a world philosophy common to East and West alike. It represents one of the gravest perils that evangelical Christianity has to deal with. Whilst rendering due reverence to these soaring ideals for manhood and for social fellowship, we are bound to ask whether they possess within themselves energies capable of solving ultimate problems in human personality. Can they carry spiritual values to their finest fruits by means of self-determination, by self-realization, by knowledge of nature, by struggles for social betterment? Can they possess and preserve efficient incentives to moral heroism and sacrificial service for others, if those who confess and pursue them lack faith in evangelical religion, the central mystery of which is the Cross?

It is this sacrificial value which gives the crowning supremacy to the Personality of Jesus as the human Ideal. This quality makes His manhood perfect. This selfsame quality gives to the story of the Jesus of history, as truly as to the Christ of experience, evangelical values. In His flawless manhood, human nature fulfils its aspirations. And in Him, 'the First-born of many brethren,' every man sees his own calling, 'predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son.' The highest within him assents to this vocation. 'He needs must love the Highest when he sees it.'

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Ripon.'

Jesus, we look to Thee,
Thy promised presence claim;
Thou in the midst of us shalt be,
Assembled in Thy name.

Thy name salvation is,
Which here we come to prove;
Thy name is life, and health, and peace,
And everlasting love.

Not in the name of pride
Or selfishness we meet;
From nature's paths we turn aside,
And worldly thoughts forget.

We meet, the grace to take
Which Thou hast freely given;
We meet on earth for Thy dear sake,
That we may meet in heaven.

Present we know Thou art,
But O Thy self reveal!
Now, Lord, let every bounding heart
The mighty comfort feel.

O may Thy quickening voice
The death of sin remove;
And bid our inmost souls rejoice
In hope of perfect love!

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

God with us	Ps. cxxxix. 1–12
God within us	Rom. viii. 26–30
Feeling after God . . .	Acts xvii. 27–28
Thinking Godwards . . .	Phil. iv. 8

PRAYER FOR RECOLLECTION :

Gracious Father of our spirits, in the stillness of this worship, may we grow more sure of Thee, Who art often nearest to us when we feel that Thou hast forsaken us. Make us aware, in this silence, that though we may forget Thee, Thou dost never forget us. If, in contact with common things, we have grown heedless of Thy Presence, if daily duty has lost its divine sanctions, if altar fires have been left untended, and Thy light within our souls has been distrusted or denied, renew us just now in reverent awareness and humble response. If pride of thought and careless speculation have dimmed our vision, recover for us the simplicity that is sure; if Thy purposes have crossed our own and Thy will held our own in subjection, enable us to trust the wisdom of Thy perfect Love and find in Thy Will our peace. So may we meet Thee where we have missed Thee most and know the joy of Thine abiding. Amen.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Ottawa.'

Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth;
Master! let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?

Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock,
In the shadow of the Rock.

Master, speak! though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart:
Master, speak! for O Thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart.
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak! and make me blest indeed.

Master, speak! and make me ready
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
Master, speak! O speak to me!

I

MAN'S INSTINCT FOR GOD

It may be said at once that the title of this paper is somewhat of a misnomer. Religious people to-day are apt to ask for a religious instinct as if it were some guarantee of ultimacy, whereas it is probable that instinct itself has a long history. An instinct is most likely the product of a long racial history of experimentation, which has ended in a fairly uniform response to certain kinds of situation. Hence a bird's instinct to build its nest is no heaven-sent ability, but an acquirement by immemorial efforts of the species. However this may be, psychology finds no specific or ready-made religious instinct in man, but only perhaps an instinct in the making. Man is young, even as compared with most other living beings, and he is rather acquiring religiousness than in present secure possession of it. We must say, rather, that he has religious *desire* ; desire rather than instinct is proper to man's appetitive nature ; and, though often baffled and frustrated, we may affirm that it perennially turns to an object which it considers to be divine. If it be true that living things reveal their nature by their ' tropisms,' or turnings to earth, water, sun, or what not, how much more does man exhibit his inmost nature by his perpetual quest for God ?

All this is not to deny the instinctive roots by which the religious desire is fed. Indeed, it is only too apparent that many instinctive elements have entered into the religious nature. Religion has drawn upon the basest as well as the noblest traits in humanity. Lust, envy, malice, and hate, as well as shame, tenderness, and generosity, have nourished it ; cruelty has often gone hand in hand with courage ; fear has enveloped it in

gloom, whilst instinctive faith has cheered it. In short, religion, if ill directed, is capable of working the utmost mischief upon mankind, as the perversion of the best is the worst. That is to say, it is the right *combination* of instinctive material which is important for religion : the formation of a religious *sentiment*. No bundle of crude instincts, religion at its higher levels is an organization of impulses or emotions about a permanent desire for the highest good that man knows, and only becomes so as the contemplative functions of his nature supervene upon, or take charge of, his animal passions and appetites. These contemplative powers, however, are no merely passive or idle spectators of events, but active, controlling, and unifying forces, much as the levers of the engineer direct and govern the explosive energies of the steam in his machinery by the slightest turn of the hand.

What are these contemplative functions ? If we take the religious consciousness in its middle reaches —neither in its lowliest nor its most exalted forms—we find that they consist of certain emotions like wonder, admiration, and awe. It seems probable that the religious attitude can be simplified into these components, which, interestingly enough, correspond to the main points of Otto's account of the numinous, namely the mysterious, the fascinating, and the tremendous. The culmination of these three in religious joy and love will mark the higher stages of religious experience, even to the point of ecstasy.

Wonder is thought to be the most simple of our three chief factors. It springs from an instinct of curiosity which is apparently natural to man, and quite primitive. It is common to many animals and to a large part of unspoiled human nature, and in a few persons it persists through life. In most, however, it seems to fade away with the years, after the fashion described in Wordsworth's ' Intimations of Immortality.' It is

evidently a great source of religion. The ways of the gods are interesting, both from a practical and a theoretical point of view. It is impossible to ignore their doings, for these bear upon human affairs ; it is nevertheless unsafe to pry into their secrets, as many a Prometheus found. Hence a hesitant posture towards them—a restrained inquisitiveness. The complete transparency of reality, desired by science, is not very congenial to religion, which is impressed with the mystery of being, whilst seeking certainty about essential facts. As Baron von Hügel puts it, religious insight is vivid yet dim. Vivid dimness bespeaks the unfathomability of deity, and hence there is great truth in the mystery religions.

The next great constituent of the religious attitude is admiration. This is said to be a blend of wonder and abasement, and so has in a greater degree that mixture of forwardness and hesitation which we remarked in wonder. There is self-abasement along with delighted enhancement of the object. This combination of delight with humiliation is one of the paradoxes of religion which the unreligious cannot easily understand. Yet it is commonly found in the attitude of the lover to his mistress, as well as in that of the slave to his master. Furthermore, it is said to be social, involving a belief in the animation of its object, so that it is the source of most of the mythology of the religions. Hence the tendency to personify nature and to result in nature-worship, by some thought to be the very foundation of all religion. Again, it is to be noticed that admiration is decidedly an aesthetic term, implying a sense of its object's beauty, and leading to its glorification. The expression of this feeling is found in praise, and religious praise is at least one of the chief ends of man, exhibited in the disposition ' to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.'

The third chief factor in the religious attitude, awe,

is said to be composed of admiration and fear, and is therefore more complex than the emotions previously studied. It maintains to an even greater degree the characteristics of attracting and repelling at once, which they exhibited. The awesome seems to be the same as the sublime, and is found conspicuously in the Jewish religion. Here the union of religion and morality induced that mystic-myotico-moral feeling in which Loisy finds the very essence of religion. But all religions in a measure call forth the sense of awe, from the dread of the primitive man at the presence of evil spirits, to the solemnity of a Kant at the spectacle of the starry heavens above and the moral law within. It is indeed principally the fact of morality which has evoked man's highest reverence, and his religion has risen in the scale of worth along with its moralization.

It must be questioned whether religion ever can lose this sense of awe, for, whilst perfect love casteth out fear, yet there always remains with the greatest saint the doubt that he may become a castaway. Perhaps in moments of ecstasy there is felt perfect security, but this is apt to be succeeded by deep exhaustion and depression. Certain it is that where the saint thinks himself to be beyond law and morality—as in the case of Trusty Tomkins in Scott's *Woodstock*—there the fall beyond the common level is in danger of being the greater. Reverence cannot be superseded in religion.

The tendencies which we have studied under the names of wonder, admiration, and awe do not exist separately in the religious character, but come together to form a complex sentiment which unifies the whole personality. This sentiment is love, the typical sentiment, expressed in Western religion in the twofold manner of the worship of God and the service of man. Man's instinct and emotions are here harmonized and sublimated, so that it can be said that religion is in the last resort the great organizer of character,

This organization, however, implies the presence to the mind of ideals which are worthy of achievement, and here is seen the very meaning of worship. Carlyle used to insist that worship implied worth-ship, and, truly, apart from belief in the worth of its object worship will cease. Now the impulse to worship is practically universal. Except for a few disappointed cynics like Timon of Athens, mankind is pathetically eager to find a worshipful object, a being to admire, love, and serve. If a man becomes an agnostic or atheist, he often makes a compensatory god of his devotion to candour and truth. It is said of the Russian that he must believe in something, if it be only a steam-engine, and the devotion to Communism shown by the godless Bolshevist puts to shame the tepid adherence to his professed creed of many a religionist. Hence one should always look for the religion of a man in his real object of worship.

That human nature is prone to worship is seen from the practically universal range of cultus in some form or other. The history of religion shows us few people who can be called godless, or who are without some public cult of worship. Occasionally there come periods when the ancient shrines are neglected, the oracles are silent, and the gods are unknown, but this is usually the prelude to the birth of a new cultus. And even when true religion is dead, man offers homage to strange superstitions which reveal his wistfulness of heart. The study of primitive man reveals the widespread belief in objects possessing strange powers, or *mana*, from which aid can be derived ; in objects which are prohibited, or *tabu*, and to which deference must be paid ; and in a blood-brotherhood, or *totem*, which binds its members together in a devoted band. From these forms of natural piety to the modern man's belief in sanitation, his fear of repressions, and his inflammatory nationalism, is a far cry but a continuous one.

The continuity is manifest in the civilized child which, it is only too evident, makes for himself a religion out of his environment, most especially by making objects of worship of his parents. Religious cultus begins in the family, and, however much the conventional forms of it may be abolished, we may judge that not till children are all brought up in public and atheistic institutions will they cease to be religious ; and then they will tend to worship the institution !

What is it that man is impelled to worship ? Briefly, it is whatever he regards as *sacred*. And the sacred may range from a pebble to a sun, from the spirit of an ancestor to the Holy Trinity. But the characteristics of the sacred are in general plain to recognize. For one thing, the sacred is the set apart, the forbidden. 'Holiness is essentially a restriction on the licence of men in the free use of natural things,' says Robertson Smith. As such it is distinguished from the profane. And in time it comes to be identified with the clean, so that purity of hands and heart is a common requirement of those who would meddle with sacred things. With forbiddenness goes secrecy, unfathomability ; it is dangerous to probe over-far into the secrets of the gods ; their ways are not as our ways and cannot be found out by searching. Hence also the antiquity of the sacred : it is usually represented as belonging to an immemorial past. Even if the gods are young, they are eternally young, and have not felt the tooth of time.

Again, the sacred is potent, productive, fertile. Indeed, some say that fertility is the most characteristic feature of religion. Mysterious powers issue forth from the sacred rod, or rock, or wafer, and man may even expect on occasion miraculous acts to express its potencies. These powers are contagious and transmissible, so that by the falling of a mantle, or the laying on of hands, a sacred mission or function may be transmitted to disciples. Men even to-day regard with

something of holy dread the hidden forces of the electron !

Once again the sacred is said to be the animate. It seems that man cannot worship the inanimate, but always regards his deities as alive. God is the living God, and hence it is difficult to believe in modern gods made of space and time. The immensities of space and time have no value for the worshipper. The mysterious universe about us, if regarded as soulless—blind, inexorable, or capricious—would be no sacred object for man, nor worthy of his adoration. Evidently then it is only that which has value which can evoke human homage, and value is found ultimately in the great ends disclosed only in conscious beings—truth, beauty, and goodness. So long as man is eager to pursue righteousness, to discover truth, and to enjoy beauty, so long the foundations of religion are secure. When man ceases to respect them he will be given over to cynicism and despair, and the desire for God will turn like a serpent into his own bosom and prove his direst bane. But the pillars of religion are built below the tides of chance ; the long search of man's chequered history for objects of worship reveals itself as the gradual attainment of a scale of values which he accepts as the revelation of God. In the acceptance and enjoyment of this revelation man finds his highest bliss, and his long quest for God as the worship of the sacred finds here its ultimate expression.

It appears, then, that natural religion is securely based upon man's desire for perfection. Springing out of, and combining, instincts into a triple strand of contemplative emotions, it culminates in a sentiment of love which impels to worship the most sacred things he knows. Through all manner of superstitions—animistic and spiritistic—he gropes his way till there shine before him the great and ultimate objects of value. And though he repeatedly stumbles aside and

goes after false gods—like the old Moloch, Mammon, or Ishtar, or the modern ones, Comfort, Power, Novelty—he feels restless till he returns again to his heart's desire, that realization of all ends ultimately precious which he calls God.

ATKINSON LEE.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Calm.'

O strangely art Thou with us, Lord,
Neither in height nor depth to seek :
In nearness shall Thy voice be heard ;
Spirit to spirit Thou dost speak.

Christ is our Advocate on high ;
Thou art our Advocate within :
O plead the truth, and make reply
To every argument of sin.

But ah, this faithless heart of mine
The way I know ; I know my Guide :
Forgive me, O my Friend divine,
That I so often turn aside.

Be with me when no other friend
The mystery of my heart can share ;
And be Thou known, when fears transcend,
By Thy best name of Comforter.

II

IDEALS OF MANHOOD

The distinction of manhood is that it can pursue an ideal. Man is great enough to recognize that life has a meaning and a goal. The process of evolution becomes in man a conscious individual striving towards some end. The human being, to quote Professor Hocking, 'deliberately undertakes, while reshaping his outer world, to reshape himself also.' To do that he must not work blindly, but, consciously and deliberately, he must set before himself an ideal.

An ideal is some standard of perfection, some end which the mind sets before itself, the attainment of which would bring completeness and self-realization. Life without ideals is devoid of significance ; it is not even human in any true sense ; it is brutal and vegetative. When a man accepts an ideal, it becomes the directing power in his life ; he pursues it because he believes it will lead to a fuller life, to self-realization, to happiness.

Psychologists remind us that everywhere in nature there is an urge toward completeness. Illustrations of this may be found in plant life, in animal life, as well as on the human level. Man is restless and aspiring, because he is conscious of being unfinished ; he is aware of his incompleteness, of his poverty of life ; his soul is athirst, his spirit is filled with longing ; there is no satisfaction. And so he must strive for fuller life, for self-fulfilment, for the realization of all that is within him.

The trouble is that it is not easy for a man to understand himself ; it is terribly difficult for him to know exactly what he wants. The interpretation of the longings and yearnings of his own soul is generally utterly

beyond him. Men who give their lives to psycho-analysis are often appalled by the baffling nature of their task. The fact is, the thinkers of this generation are discovering that man is bigger even than they thought. Within every human soul there are vast uncharted seas, deeps never yet sounded, heights never yet scaled, glories never yet discovered, latent powers never yet released. Men are asking with a new wistfulness, and with expectant wonder, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' Many are more sure than ever that 'Thou madest him to have dominion.'

Man is relatively a new-comer on the planet, and religion, at any rate, places no limit to his possibilities of development. How can the urge to completeness in man be in any measure fulfilled; how can he realize himself? That is surely the supreme question, for it is in line with the whole trend of things. With a flash of insight St. Paul declared that the whole creation is on tiptoe, as it were, stretching forward expectantly, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, waiting for a more divine type of humanity. The tragedy of it is, that so many are missing the way on this great quest. Our generation is convinced of one thing—that life was meant to be full and rich, exhilarating and joyous; they are eager to fill the cup and drink it to the dregs, often to find, alas, that, instead of the elixir of life, they have taken into their souls a deadly poison.

Self-Expression

The crudest solution of the problem is that man can realize himself by self-expression. 'Every instinct must find expression; repression is wrong, and the root of all psychic troubles.' In some form or another this is being proclaimed to-day from the housetops, and there is a widespread revolt against all restraint. Youth is demanding emancipation from moral and social conventions. But we must insist that such a view of life

means, not the realization, but the negation of self, not the integration but the disintegration of personality. The very notion of self involves some unifying principle among one's instincts and impulses, some court of appeal, some sense of direction. One may satisfy a desire and leave the *self* profoundly dissatisfied ; one may give the rein to a disorderly mob of impulses, and enslave rather than liberate the personality. A man who continues to express himself in this way will soon have no self to express. In the very interest of self-realization there must be discipline, subjection, sacrifice ; and the experience of humanity clearly proves that life thereby suffers no impoverishment, but rather that it is strengthened and enriched.

Secularism

Many of our contemporaries who reject this way of self-realization are yet looking to the visible world for entire satisfaction of all men's wants—even his intellectual and spiritual requirements. What impresses Dean Inge in his book on Christian Ethics is the extreme secularity of the average citizen. He writes, 'I am inclined to think that the prospect of an entirely secular civilization, in which social morality shall be inculcated without any religious sanction, and in which mankind shall direct its own destinies, without reference to any superhuman authority, has actually driven the Christian hope, and the morals which depend upon it, into the background.' The Dean may be too gloomy here, but every careful observer is bound to admit that the greatest rival of Christianity in the world to-day is this secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things. The modern world, with its dazzling scientific achievements, is absorbingly interesting. The avenues to pleasure are alluring and manifold, and so multitudinous and aggressive are the claims of the world that no time is left, no mental reserve, for meditation

on the deeper thing. Lippmann, in his *Preface to Morals*, quotes a Greek poet as summing up the modern situation, ' Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus.' Among those who no longer believe in the religion of their fathers, some are proudly defiant. Like Henley in his ' Invictus,' they thank whatever gods there be for their unconquerable souls. Their heads may be bloody, but they are unbowed. That, however, is not the prevailing mood ; the majority are merely indifferent. Life here and now is interesting in its own right ; the appeal of business and travel, drama and sport, holds them in its fascinating grip. Compared with these tangible things, the spiritual world seems far off, and unreal.

There can be no satisfaction in this way of life, for it refuses to face facts, lives in the present and the superficial, and deliberately avoids the depths. There is no development of the personality, no inward cumulative growth, no harmony of the soul. It is the way of disintegration and ruin for all that is highest and best in manhood.

Humanism

The finer and more thoughtful minds in the secular world turn to humanism for satisfaction. In the pursuit of beauty and knowledge they seek to deal with the hunger of their spirits. There is a splendid note about the appreciation of beauty, whether in music or painting, poetry or sculpture. Beauty has a universal quality, and has a value in itself. There is something strangely moving about a sunset, and a chorus ending from Euripides. It breaks in upon our complacency, and leads us to the edge of the Infinite. And yet, when the cult of beauty is made a substitute for religion, we discover its utter inadequacy. In that flowering age of beauty, the Italian Renaissance, we see in the history of many lives a high degree of aesthetic appreciation

entirely divorced from character. Dr. Rufus Jones is right when he says that ' aesthetics has a subtle tendency to substitute an emotional state for a real achievement.' The aesthetic temperament is not always robustly moral. There is no salvation here.

Nor are those who devote their lives exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge much nearer the solution of man's self-realization. Truth is never an enemy of religion, and every pioneer in thought, who scatters the darkness of ignorance, and illuminates some aspect of reality, is helping forward the march of humanity. The gospel in our day, if it is to win a hearing, must be presented and interpreted in the light of all discovered and verified truth, scientific and historical. And yet knowledge cannot save, because the deepest things lie beyond knowledge. In the words of Professor John MacMurray, ' If our purposes are to be determined by clear knowledge, they must perforce be narrow and ignoble.' It is the unseen things that are eternal, the incomprehensible things that claim our deepest loyalty. Browning exalted knowledge, but he admitted its limitations. His Grammarian he leaves on a lone mountain-top. ' There you have the glory and the desperate tragedy of humanism—the instinct for flight, the absence of wings.' Here comes in the place of faith, for faith is convinced of what we do not see.

Methodism has always stood for enlightenment, for education, for the eager pursuit of knowledge, but modern science can never be the power of God unto salvation—not even modern psychology.

Social Reconstruction

Where, then, can man turn, if he has no resources within, for salvation, for self-realization? Perhaps he will be brought nearer the goal by looking without rather than within, by altruism rather than egoism. If he can build up a new environment for others as

well as himself will he not at the same time achieve his own redemption? Man is a social animal; he must realize his personality in contact with his fellows; he must express himself in the creation of a new society. The present social order is full of anomalies and injustices; man cannot find a full salvation until he finds it in company with his fellows in a redeemed society.

There is no need to stress the truth in these contentions; we have moved away decisively from a purely individualistic conception of salvation. The Christian is concerned about the creation of a new environment, where, free from darkness and pestilence, the soul can reach out towards completeness. And yet the transformation of society of itself can only civilize a man; it cannot save him. It may make him polite; it cannot make him holy. As Eucken reminds us, we may develop a social utilitarianism which destroys all inner values, and makes the sole aim of life to provide the means of life. Social reform may be so approached, even by the Christian, as to secularize the gospel.

The Fundamental Problem

We need no reminding that in the most favourable environment, where every influence is helpful, we are still confronted with the 'corruption of man's heart.' And that is the fundamental and intractable problem. Dr. Johnson was asked whether he thought man was naturally good, and his prompt reply was, 'No more than a wolf.' It is this fact of sin which is ignored by all purely human efforts for the salvation of humanity. Appreciation of the true and the beautiful may leave a man impotent to deal with his disabling weaknesses. In the conflict, man becomes conscious of the want of an adequate ideal, and power to attain it.

There is a vacancy, an unrest, a hunger, an uneasy sense of frustration, in the heart of multitudes. This

modern world may be interesting and fascinating, it may open up manifold avenues to pleasure, but it is not satisfying to the self. In the deepest moments of insight, men know that neither secularism, nor humanism, gives a sense of harmony, power, self-fulfilment, for what matters supremely is not enlightenment, is not enjoyment, but goodness. Kant says, 'If righteousness should perish, it would not be worth while to live on the earth.' In the depth of his being man becomes aware of this inner world of conscience, with which he must come to terms. There can be no sincerity without facing this fact, and the demands are more than he can meet. There is a deep longing for cleansing and power. Man cannot be happy in his earthly environment; he is bigger than the material universe; he is crying out for the living God. And here comes in the gospel, with its bold and confident claim, a claim to provide both ideal and dynamic, to provide this not only for the enlightened, but for the morally degenerate. Here is the glory of our Christianity: 'The vilest offender may turn and find grace.' Can Jesus adequately satisfy the ideals, aspirations, longings of humanity? That is the crucial question. Three years ago last Easter, an International Missionary Council was held at Jerusalem. There were present acknowledged leaders of the Christian forces of some fifty countries. They surveyed in a searching manner the needs of humanity—humanity in every country and in every stage of mental, moral, and spiritual development, and what was the message? 'The gospel is the answer to the world's greatest need.' That is a confident affirmation in face of all the facts.

The good news for man is that man is not left alone in his search for self-realization; God also is seeking man's completeness. When men come to their deeper selves, they say, 'I will arise, and go to the Father,' and when they are a great way off the Father meets

them. And when they arrive home they find all for which their soul craves. A life that is glad, free, abundant, and it is all a gift to be received, it is all of grace. Man learns his own limitations ; all he can do by himself alone is to bring his will into harmony with the deepest and highest in him and with the underlying reality in the universe, with God ; he can stretch forth his hand, and by faith grasp eternal life, life of a higher quality, and then he discovers himself uplifted, unified, and knows that the achievement is not his own, but the manifestation of a higher power. He has encountered divine strength and love.

In the quest for the fulfilment of his ideal, he finds that the Cross of Jesus is the intensest point of light, and there he discovers that whosoever loseth his life shall find it.

J. H. Squire.

LET US RECALL THE IDEALS OF JESUS :

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn,

For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,

For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,

For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,

For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,

For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

For they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad ; for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Praise.'

Spirit of wisdom, turn our eyes
From earth and earthly vanities
To heavenly truth and love ;
Spirit of understanding true,
Our souls with heavenly light endue
To seek the things above.

Spirit of counsel, be our Guide ;
Teach us, by earthly struggles tried,
Our heavenly crown to win :
Spirit of fortitude, Thy power
Be with us in temptation's hour,
To keep us pure from sin.

Spirit of knowledge, lead our feet
In Thine own paths, so safe and sweet,
By angel footsteps trod ;
Where Thou our Guardian true shalt be,
Spirit of gentle piety,
To keep us close to God.

III

JESUS—THE PERFECT MAN

I SHALL not attempt either an outline biography or a characterization of the Jesus of history to-day ; the time-limit you have assigned me makes both impossible. I shall ask and suggest an answer to the question, ' How can we relate the doctrine of the perfect humanity of our Lord to the Methodist witness and emphasis ? '

We shall all agree, I take it, that the most remarkable feature of the spirit of our age in its religious aspects, has been its growing and persistent interest in the Jesus of the Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels have emerged from the baptism of fire to which they have been subjected for a generation now as, by the consent of friends and enemies alike, incomparably the most important books in the world. In the last year or two I have addressed all sorts of audiences about the Jesus of history. I have seen large halls in West Riding towns filled with eager people of all ages, half of whom, it was estimated by those who knew, were non-churchgoers. During the last few months I gave a course of addresses on the Gospels in an institute in Ancoats. There, in an underground room amongst the billiard-tables, I found a group of men without a collar between them, all of them collected from the street corner, many of them familiar with Strangeways from the inside, all ready to ask eager and intelligent questions about the Synoptic problem, to listen for over an hour to a detailed discussion of the sources of the Gospels, and to ask for more at the end. This had nothing to do with the speaker ; it had everything to do with the subject.

Alike in the East and the West, within the Church and out of it, amongst educated and uneducated alike,

large audiences can be secured, and their attention can be held, so long as you talk about Jesus the perfect man; while publishers and booksellers agree that any readable book on Jesus, reasonably well advertised, is secure of a large and steady sale. Many wise men have prophesied that the tide would turn; so far as I can see, it is still rising. Many good men wish for a different emphasis; they may be right or they may be wrong—that is not the question—their protests are, by their own confession, ineffectual. Surely it is our business to see God's Spirit at work; if this interest is due to nothing better than curiosity, did He not say that He would draw all men to Him, and can we not trust Him to deal with them when they come?

But there is a substantial reason for the hesitation which many good evangelicals and churchmen feel in face of this tumult of outspoken inquiry, for it has not led so far either to a strengthening of organized Church life or to the clarifying of the preacher's message. Jesus has become more mysterious as He has been more closely studied; once again that strange saying has been fulfilled: 'They recognized Him, and He vanished out of their sight.' There is a secret of Jesus still. There is little encouragement in the closer study of the Gospels for those who want a manageable plan of salvation, such as can be outlined on half a sheet of notepaper and handed to inquirers as containing the kernel of the gospel. As soon as we build up a handy generalization on the basis of one of His sayings, another equally well attested rises up to question it. If we feel that we must at all costs know exactly where we are, we may be tempted to become Romanists or Fundamentalists—either alternative being an evasion of the challenge to spiritual adventure made by the Jesus of the Gospels. Those of us who cannot take refuge in any authority but His are not going to have an easy passage, whether we are concerned with our own peace

of mind or our relations with our people. But one thing at least seems clear, and it is not a comforting reflection. The values of modern Methodism were not His.

We hear continually of the resources of our Church ; He said that the richer you grow, the harder it is to get into the Kingdom.

The first question asked about a minister is, ' Is he an acceptable preacher ? ' He took it as an axiom that no prophet is acceptable among His own people, and at the end of three years' ministry He was crucified by those to whom He came ! We believe—or it would appear that we do—in advertising : ' He would not strive or cry,' and seems to have been chiefly anxious that those who saw His wonderful works should not make them known. I know that such contrasts can be in various ways mitigated ; is it not better to confess that on these matters we have not the mind of Christ ? As long as that is so, there can be no peace for us ; if our consciences do not condemn us because our motives are good, our children will rise up against us. Jesus still tends to divide father and son, mother and daughter, as a score of painful examples which have come to my notice in the last few weeks sufficiently prove to me. You can be a sincere evangelical Christian and still believe that there is something sacred about property ; you cannot live very long in the company of the Jesus of the Gospels without misgivings about any number of things which our people take for granted. As it is not easy to see how the Church can exist without adequate numbers and a large expenditure of money, we are involved in a series of bewildering contradictions from which I can see no escape. All the good causes to which our lives are given depend for their maintenance upon the gifts of rich people ; if we give expression to our doubts about the way in which their money has been made, we seem to be biting the hand which feeds us. It would be much easier if we could adopt some

war-cry like ' Christ for the world ' or ' Jesus is Lord,' without inquiring too closely what kind of Jesus He was and is. But He will not let us escape from His relentless demand for reality either in much serving or in those dogmatic assertions which we repeat to keep our courage up.

It is often suggested that the result of the study of the human Jesus has been to sentimentalize religion. Possibly the first effect of the renaissance of interest in the Synoptic Jesus has been an access of tenderness and warmth. Preachers have of late years tended to turn from Wesley to Whittier, from

> Thou Son of God, whose flaming eyes
> Our inmost thoughts perceive

to

> Warm, sweet, tender, even yet ;

that phase will pass, and is passing. No one who knew Him ever called Him either ' sweet ' or ' tender.' He called Himself ' meek and lowly in heart,' but that was not what they said about Him, whatever they may have felt. Whether Peter said, ' Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' when Jesus first called him in Galilee or not, his cry represents far more closely what His disciples felt about Him : ' They feared in their joy, and rejoiced in their fear,' but fear was never quite absent in those days from their thoughts of Him. All the lovely things that have been said about Him from the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians are true. His gentleness with outcasts, His enlivening humour and love of a good story for its own sake, His appreciation of the humour and humours of others, His glorious compassion for tired and spiritless people, His perfect understanding of women, His delight in little children and in the company of unsophisticated people like His fishermen-friends, His relish for character and

characters, even those which repel some of us, above all, His power to save others and His inability to save Himself, it is all true and all unspeakably moving. But so much more is true ! At every turn we come upon the most amazing paradoxes—the young man impatient to change the world, and sure that the new age is here, along with the man old before His time, some of whose sayings sound the depths of disillusion and despair, signs everywhere of inward storm and stress along with suggestions of a yet deeper peace. More impressive than any other of these apparent contraries is the union of gentleness and relentlessness —gentleness, must we not say, with the confessed sinner, relentlessness with the professedly religious ? Truly ' all things are naked and forced to hold their heads up in the sight of Him with whom we have to do '! For the sins of those whom the Puritan tradition has taught us to call ' fallen ' the Jesus of the Gospels has nothing but a kind of shamed compassion more eloquent of purity than any denunciation could be. With our sins, jealousy and pride, pettiness and greed and fear, He will make no truce, and they, our sins, the sins of well-intentioned people like ourselves—the Gospels will not let us escape the incredible fact—turned upon Him at last and hounded Him to death, not because His murderers were bad—any more than we are bad—but because He would not let them alone.

If this, or anything approaching this, be true, what stronger foundation could we have for the doctrine of universal sinfulness, on which our gospel of salvation by sheer grace rests ? Without the story of the life and death of Jesus we might have indulged in comfortable generalizations about the converted and the unconverted, and because we abstain from the grosser sins of the flesh, and on the whole try to be kind and unselfish, have looked on ourselves with a certain degree of complacency ; new that exit from humiliation is

closed for us once and for all, for we believe that He, this relentless, inexorable Jesus, shall come to be our Judge : ' God has appointed a day when He shall judge the world by a Man whom He has ordained.' And we may be sure that judgement will begin at the house of God—that is, with us, as it did in the days of His flesh. So the Gospels bring us once again, shamed and trembling, to the Cross, and to the love which will not let us go. He is with us all the days, and we may be sure of His companionship ; but let us not forget that that companionship means, not security only or chiefly, rather what will often be the bewildering discipline of daily learning and unlearning, of constant and wounding humiliation, until at last we learn humility. Indeed, the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are born of God ; but, until we have learnt by bitter experience that we are ' hopeless, helpless, undone sinners ' still and always, the very Spirit within us will not let us rest.

Even when we have learned the hard lesson of humility, the peace which will be ours will not be ours, but His, and, like His, will not at once drive out, but lie beneath the storm and stress of daily living ; there will always be a conflict between inward and outward, and, just when we are safest, some fresh vision of the Cross, some soul-shattering word of Jesus, will bring us to our knees again, for we forget so quickly.

Lest we should rest content with words and credal definitions, lest we should come to think that, secure ourselves, our business is now to preach to others, lest knowledge of the truth should come to take the place of living in its white and searching light, we must let ourselves be drawn back with the rest of the motley company of men and women who are looking at Him in these days ; looking up at Him we shall be afraid, but need not be too much afraid, for we may be sure that this risen Lord who is the Jesus of the Gospels,

however relentlessly He condemn the sort of people we are, is not going to let us go. In the last generation the picture of the Jesus of the Gospels has been very roughly treated ; scarcely anything that He said or did has been left unquestioned ; but out of the confusion He has risen again, and, if we want to have the picture of man's helplessness and God's grace illuminated and alive, with hands and feet to carry us away, we must live long enough in the Synoptic Gospels for Jesus to lay hold of us, and to become at once our Judge and our Saviour.

To this Jesus,

> Nothing in our hands we bring,
> Simply to His cross we cling ;
> Naked, come to Him for dress ;
> Helpless, look to Him for grace.

So it will always be, so long as we live with the Jesus of history, to whom 'all judgement is entrusted because He is the Son of man.'

J. A. FINDLAY.

AN ACT OF SELF-EXAMINATION :

It is the eternal purpose of God for each of us that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Let us see what has been our response in heart, in mind, in will, to the gift and calling of God in Christ and to His great example.

If we have not believed Him in wonder and joy,

If we have not been childlike enough, simple and humble enough to be His debtors, to receive all from Christ, that we may render all to Him,

If our early faith has in any degree lost its simplicity and spontaneity,

Let us turn anew to Him who giveth more grace.

If we have made no fresh discoveries of Him, who is so inexhaustible,

If our minds do not find in Him alike their impulse and their rest,

If He is not more and more the centre of all our thoughts and the ground of all our hopes,

Let us turn anew to Him who giveth more grace.

If the allegiance of our will is wavering, inconstant, feeble, or divided,

If we are not earnestly resolved to follow Him, to obey Him in success and failure, to hear and keep His every word, to prove and do His perfect will,

Let us turn anew to Him who giveth more grace.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Baca.'

Thy life was given for me,
Thy blood, O Lord, was shed,
That I might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead :
Thy life was given for me ;
What have I given for Thee ?

Long years were spent for me
In weariness and woe,
That through eternity
Thy glory I might know :
Long years were spent for me ;
Have I spent one for Thee ?

And Thou hast brought to me
Down from Thy home above
Salvation full and free,
Thy pardon and Thy love :
Great gifts Thou broughtest me ;
What have I brought to Thee ?

O let my life be given,
My years for Thee be spent,
World-fetters all be riven,
And joy with suffering blent :
Thou gav'st Thyself for me ;
I give myself to Thee.

PRAYER :

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

BENEDICTION :

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

III

THE CALL OF YOUTH

CHAIRMAN : THE LORD MAYOR OF SHEFFIELD,
ALD. H. W. JACKSON, LL.B.

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The problems of adolescence were probably never better understood than now, and they were never more difficult to handle. A new insight has enabled us to read the mind of youth with greater sympathy, and to discern the mental unrest occasioned by a rapid physical development and the awakening of romance, and by the heightened self-consciousness which these induce. Adolescence is often a period of acute spiritual loneliness, which takes refuge from itself in the gang and the team, or seeks congenial fellowship, even with companions who are older and of different sex. Withal it is a period in which occur delicate and decisive movements of the Holy Spirit, including a sensitive awareness of sin. These are moods of the soul when youth may be kindled into flame by a glowing idealism, and be moved to the dedication of itself to great and adventurous living.

For these reasons it is a period of life which calls imperatively to the Christian teacher and leader. Will the youth of to-day, with its sterling qualities of independence, love of untrammelled freedom and adventurousness, be deaf to the appeal of Christ and His Cross? Our responsibility is so to present the call that our young people may see how the flame of passion may be exalted into pure and holy love, and that, above all, the service of Christ may be discerned to be the noblest of heroisms.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Laudes Domini.'

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries,
  May Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair :
  May Jesus Christ be praised!

When sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit sighs,
  May Jesus Christ be praised!
When evil thoughts molest,
With this I shield my breast—
  May Jesus Christ be praised!

Does sadness fill my mind?
A solace here I find—
  May Jesus Christ be praised!
Or fades my earthly bliss?
My comfort still is this—
  May Jesus Christ be praised!

To God, the Word, on high
The hosts of angels cry,
  May Jesus Christ be praised!
Let mortals, too, upraise
Their voice in hymns of praise :
  May Jesus Christ be praised!

Let earth's wide circle round
In joyful notes resound,
  May Jesus Christ be praised!
Let air, and sea, and sky,
From depth to height, reply,
  May Jesus Christ be praised!

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

A youth at the feet of Jesus . .	Mark x. 17–22
Youth hears Christ's call . .	Mark i. 16–20

PRAYER :

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS :

(*All standing.*)

Minister :

Jesus said : The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment.

People :

Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Minister :

And the second is like unto it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

People :

Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Minister :

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

People :

Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all this Thy law in our hearts, we beseech Thee.

LET US PRAY :

O Almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things Thou wouldest have us to do : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Bishopgarth.'

To Thee, O God, our hearts we raise,
In humble supplication,
For those who seek in childhood's days
A lifelong consecration.
To Thee they come with vows renewed,
The right from wrong discerning ;
O send them forth with power endued,
With zeal and courage burning !

O Saviour Christ, to Thee we pray,
With heavenly manna feed them ;
Thyself the Life, the Truth, the Way,
Through all life's changes lead them.
When fails the heart in warfare long,
When faith and love are dying,
O make them in their weakness strong,
While on Thy might relying !

O Holy Spirit, Fount of Life,
Through all their days protect them ;
Their help in need, their shield in strife,
With sevenfold gifts direct them.
Inspired with love and holy fear,
And pledged to high endeavour,
O grant them grace to persevere,
And seal them Thine for ever !

A hymn composed for the Confirmation of the Prince of Wales, and sung in the Private Chapel, Windsor Castle, June 24, 1910.
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I

YOUTH AND THE CHALLENGE OF TO-DAY

We hear much to-day of the clash betwixt the younger and the older generations. That speaks of nothing new. Shakespeare sang, 'Crabbèd age and youth cannot live together.' But we must not forget the adjective, for he was too true an observer of life to insist that age and youth could not 'live together.' Sometimes aged people are stupid; sometimes young people are foolish. The truth is that neither one nor the other has the monopoly of wisdom. But youth has one great and glorious gift, and that is *youth*. Rupert Brooke sang:

> These poured out
> The red, sweet wine of youth.

That is youth—red, for there is colour in it; sweet, for there is charm in it; wine, for there is sparkle in it. The younger generation is much criticized to-day, and oftentimes strangely unfairly. Its critics would do well to remember that you cannot rightly bring an indictment against a community. There are all kinds of young people, and most of them keep their secret to themselves. Many criticisms are hurled against youth to-day, and I wish to discuss three of these indictments. There are those who say that youth is not listening to the challenge of to-day, and that—

1. Youth is Frivolous

The critic of youth says that youth lacks seriousness—that it is too light-hearted; that it seeks the whirling dance rather than the crusade. Youth might reply as the Frenchman who said, 'You call us light because we are quick.' There is a great difference betwixt these two things. We do not want to put old heads on young shoulders. Fortunately, God will not allow any one

to do that. Youth ought to have swing, vivacity, and a somewhat careless audacity. It is easy to see the flippancy of youth. That is on the surface. Its talk often shocks the elders. Its imprudences are obvious ; its light handling of things which to older people are holy often causes a shock. Some arks which are sacred to the last generation are carelessly jostled by youth. Yet beneath all that there is the real youth—questioning, wondering, yearning. Many young people ask the great question, 'Why am I here? What does life mean? What must I do?' I remember a young fellow who was noted for his careless gaiety. He could turn anything into a limerick or into a jest. He was brilliant, debonair, and seemingly light-hearted and light-minded. Then the call came to him. He flung to the winds all thought of a worldly career, and answered the call to go to the foreign field, where he is at this time. He has sublimated his high spirits into gay service, and has revealed in his work for the Kingdom a true high-mindedness. He certainly did not wear his seriousness upon his sleeve, but it was in his heart.

I call to mind one of the brightest girls I have ever met, with a mirth and humour which played about her like summer lightning. To-day she is labouring amongst black children, seeking to serve them with her infectious gaiety and her underlying seriousness. She wrote to us the other day and said, 'I have never been so happy—one is always happy when one is in the right place.' There is always somewhere in youth that which can respond to the deep notes. We need to ask more of them, and to appeal to that which is deepest and most noble in them. They can never be truly at home in the superficialities, for there is within them a deep hunger for reality. Youth knows its weariness, its boredom, its contempt of the trivial, and can say, 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are

restless until they find rest in Thee.' There is in youth a deep seriousness, and it waits for a message which will challenge it by its high demands and by its chivalrous calls. We have piped unto it and it has danced ; let us strike the deeper chords and it will—march to battle. Another indictment which is made against Youth to-day is that—

2. YOUTH IS LAWLESS

There are those who say that it will not submit to authority, and that it is in revolt. And so it ought to be. That is the law of progress. The call to leave things as they are does not appeal to youth. It questions, it cross-examines ; it cannot see why it should accept many of the ideas of its fathers. It will not be dragooned or bullied into acceptance of any dogma. It is not convinced by merely external authority, and therein I believe it is right. This is not wild Bolshevism, but it is youth's way of marching towards a richer and fuller truth. Youth will be constrained, but not compelled. If the Church will put on her beautiful garments of love and service, her appeal to youth will be like Roland's trumpet-call—vibrant, ringing, and challenging. Its clarion call will awaken a response. Youth will not accept the old sanctions, because they are old. It is questioning everything to-day, and many of the old shibboleths seem to it as dead as an Egyptian mummy. But it bows before Jesus, and the living Word, and before a Church that is true to its Master. Youth is not blind to Truth, for youth sees visions, and its soul leaps out to the heroic, and above all to the Hero. When it sees the face of Christ, it worships and adores. It certainly has little respect for institutions merely because they are old institutions ; it will, however, live and die for a flag, and it will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

Youth is a great paradox ; it is anarchic, rebellious, in the face of authority, when it does not appeal to the

best and the highest : but it is often the very soul of loyalty when it hears Christ calling, 'Follow Me!' The youth of this generation is born into a world in which everything is moving, in which all the standards are being challenged—and we are surprised that it is not static. The marvel is that amidst the rocking of the earthquake youth keeps its feet ; that amidst all life's madness it remains sane ; that in the new freedom it seeks not for licence. Youth asks that it may find truth in the only way in which it can be found—by personal discovery. We cannot win youth's heart unless we give it its head. Youth can make the great response, and march with joy to the great fight, under the divine leadership ; and can say with Emily Brontë, one of the most freedom-loving souls amongst English writers :

> No coward soul is mine,
> No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere.
> I see Heaven's glories shine,
> And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

Another indictment which is made against youth is that—

3. YOUTH IS SELFISH

The older generation looks around, and sees youth, with its gaiety and its irresponsibility—with its seeming carelessness and its zest for pleasure—and says youth is selfish. To some extent this is true, but it is not only against youth that the charge with justice can be made. There is much truth in John Galsworthy's remark, 'Every one—having been in the earthquake which lasted four years—has lost the habit of standing still.' We are all on the move ; restlessness has got into our blood. We want more entertainment, more 'talkies,' more jazz, more thrills, more of something which ought to be called *x*—for it is the unknown quantity. We cannot wonder that youth shares in the world-wide *malaise*. The mid-Victorians are often

derided to-day, and sometimes rightly, but they rose early in the morning, they worked hard, built our institutions, took office, and had a sense of duty and responsibility which we greatly need to-day. This is a quality which we covet for ourselves—and for youth. For the tasks of the world to-day are so great, and without youth cannot be accomplished—the building of the Temple of Peace, the re-ordering of Society on a basis of co-operation, the fashioning of Christ's Kingdom on earth. I asked a young girl some time ago what she had been doing in the long vacation, and she said, 'Just dashing about.' What a vivid picture! It is delightful, but it is not good enough. Too many of us are breathless, panting—but we have only been 'dashing about.' There is not enough purpose in our multitudinous tasks. We are zig-zagging, but we are not, like Christian, addressing ourselves to the journey and to the great goal—the Celestial City. When I asked someone lately what she meant to do with her life, she at once replied, 'Have a good time!' The reply was candid, for youth to-day certainly has that virtue. But it is an absurd answer, for no one can have a good time on that basis. Life is so curiously balanced that selfishness in the end slays itself, for it isolates and starves our friendships, and at last leaves us tragically alone.

The only true way to have a good time is to seek to give a good time to others. That is Life's paradox, and its beautiful secret. Bernard Shaw says, 'A gentleman is a man who puts more into life than he takes out of it.' That is what we should seek to do, and, if we do that, we shall find that there is something paradoxical here, for such gentlemen in the end get most out of life. 'It is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still?' It was our Lord who told us the greatest way of living. 'He who would be first amongst you, let him be the servant of

everybody.' That is the way for youth and for us all. Life challenges us to-day ; the calls come from near and from far. We must rise superior to the spirit of our selfishness, and take a towel and gird ourselves. Dr. Pusey once said, ' If I were dining out, and some one said that Christ was in the room, I should look around, not amongst the guests, but amongst the servants.' The Lord always stands there, and we who would be true to Him must take our places beside Him as servants. We shall only truly be servants when we live in close fellowship with the divine Lord. ' He went about doing good, for God was with Him.' Religion and ethics are linked together. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder ! It is only thus that we shall get out of ourselves, for our life will be hid with Christ in God, and will reveal its beauty in a life of service. It is upon all youth that Christ looks with love, and to all youth that He calls, ' Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me.' That is the challenge of to-day.

Youth has the great possessions—vitality, high spirits, gay mirth, courage, seriousness, loyalty ; Christ asks all these things of you, and asks now. He asks them of you because He believes that you are capable of the great response. He asks for His own sake—for He needs you ; but for your sakes also—for it is only thus that you can find the life more abundant ; and for the world's sake—for without you the great tasks cannot be accomplished. This is the one clear call which comes to us now—the one clear call with the threefold peal in it. For the sake of Jesus, for the sake of your neighbour, for the sake of yourself, say—

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil ;
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will !

W. Bardsley Brash.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Arizona.'

Go forth to life, O child of earth,
Still mindful of thy heavenly birth ;
Thou art not here for ease or sin,
But manhood's noble crown to win.

Though passion's fires are in thy soul,
Thou canst through Christ their flames control ;
Though tempters strong beset thy way,
Through Christ thou art more strong than they.

Go on from innocence of youth
To manly pureness, manly truth,
God's angels still arenear to save ;
And God Himself doth help the brave.

Then forth to life, O child of earth ;
Be worthy of thy heavenly birth :
For noble service thou art here ;
Thy neighbour help, thy God revere.

PRAYER :

O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. May we seek what is true, see what is beautiful, love what is pure, and follow what is right, for the sake of Him Who is Truth and Loveliness, Purity and Righteousness, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II

THE BECKONING OF THE FUTURE

We are faced to-day with a totally new situation. There have been great changes before, but we knew that after a time things would return to normal. We talked of the swing of the pendulum, and what we said corresponded to the facts. But that is just where to-day is different. We see, not a pendulum swinging, but an age passing away. We are not passing through change to 'normalcy,' but from change to still greater change. We have definitely turned a corner in the world's history, and have come upon a new landscape. The old landmarks have not merely shifted, they have ceased to be. Nothing can restore the conditions of the pre-petrol age. We may come to think differently of the physical universe, but its scale will remain as vast as we now see it to be : it will not shrink back to the accommodatingly human perspectives of an earlier day. 'The wireless' may deteriorate into futility, but its secret will not be lost. Here and there men may, through lack of vigilance, let their liberties be filched from them for a time, but there are no signs that ancient shackles will again become the fashion. We may change our ideas, but the vast stores of modern knowledge will not be dissipated, and we shall not exchange the spacious perspectives of to-day for the narrower ones of yesterday. After earlier revolutions men found things settling down. The system rocked a little, and eventually recovered equilibrium on a slightly altered base. But that is not our case. We see, not a system rocking, but a whole order cracking. System there is not. At the moment there is only chaos. 'Whirl is king.' Order will emerge, for men cannot live in perpetual confusion. But it will be a new order. When

the time for system-making comes, it will be a different system built from the bottom up.

This condition affects us all. The old and middle-aged find it all very disturbing. The new stresses set up unaccountable pains in mind and spirit. These may be stoically ignored, though more frequently they lead to gusts of irritation or spells of sheer despair. But the condition of youth is different. The differences between youth and age have perhaps been exaggerated. There are, after all, certain profound human qualities that belong to man as man, and are independent of age or sex. But there is one difference that cannot be ignored. Youth can confidently look forward to another fifty years of life. Age dare not. That is why youth looks to the future. It turns to the years ahead as though it were turning home. This is as it should be, and as, in the order of nature, it is bound to be. For the future is youth's natural habitat. It does not belong, except incidentally, to the past, and it cannot rest in the present. It is ever looking for a city, and, if man is still to advance, it must ever be journeying to a Promised Land. So that there is a certain natural affinity between youth and the future. Youth hears the future calling it, and everything that is genuine in it rises to respond. What is this call? To what does the future beckon the youth of to-day? Amidst the clash of appeals—for there are many—what are some of the notes that we should distinguish and heed?

The Call: (1) Attitudes

The first thing to which the future calls us, it seems to me, is the attitude of adaptability. In R. H. Thouless's *Straight and Crooked Thinking* occur three striking sentences. Let us take him to express our point. 'Astronomers tell us that the human race has many millions of years more to spend on this globe if it does not destroy itself by wars. It is only by unceasing

flexibility of mind that we can continue to adapt ourselves to our ever-changing environment. Inflexibility of mind will lead to the extermination of the human race.' I wish we could all of us appreciate the truth of that statement. It appears to me to be fundamental for every phase of life. It is the failure to appreciate it that underlies much of our trouble in education, in religion, and in social life. The stability that marked the chapter of human history which closed with the war has misled us into thinking that the conditions of human life are largely fixed ones. That is why we used to lay so much emphasis on habit. Youth, we said, was the period for the formation of habits. What we had to do with our young people was to get them into right habits of acting, speaking, and thinking. Then they would be all right for the rest of their lives. In the time of crisis the firmly rooted habit of conduct would assert itself, and there you are. It was all so plain to us that we put it into a little jingle. ' Sow an act and reap a habit,' we said. ' Sow a habit and reap a character.'

Now, this was never more than a half-truth. Habits have a certain value. No one wishes to deny that. But it is always a minor value. The quality which distinguishes man from his inferior cousins in the animal world is not his capacity to form habits, but his ability to break loose from them. The outstanding thing about man, the quality which has given him his lordship over creation, is his marvellous flexibility. In the whole range of creation there is no creature less encrusted with habits. His mobile hands, his flexible nervous system, and the wide reach of his mind—these have brought him to where he is. It is evident that Nature intended that there should be one of her sons able on occasion to strike out along new paths and to do unprecedented deeds.

It is thus precisely such days as those we live in, and

those that are ahead, which give man the chance of coming into his own. We are built to live in changing conditions. A settled security and an unchanging environment are not the millennium : they are times of decadence. The new demands that society is making upon us, the new problems in politics, and the new challenge that has come to religion—these are our native air. It is in such days that we grow to our full height. It stirs our pulses to realize that we are living in one of the great creative phases of the world's history. To look out on the new landscape that has opened on our astonished gaze, and to realize that there are neither landmarks nor maps, thrills the natural adventurousness of our souls. It is into such days that men who are men pray to be born, and those who live in them are to be envied indeed. Is it not a great thing that in these days we should be carrying forward the huge experiment of Methodist Union? For experiment it is. We have given thought to it, and prayer to it, but not even the youngest of us is audacious enough to prophesy how it is going to turn out. But if any one should leap to the opportunity which it presents it is surely the young of to-day, those people who for another fifty years will have the chance of watching and working so mighty an experiment.

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And so the first thing I want to say as I try and catch the call of the future is, Let us eschew rigidity. The trouble with most of us to-day is that we are trying to tackle a post-war world with pre-war minds. Our minds are not supple enough for our tasks. We bring such precedents as we know from bygone days. We can't help bringing them, for they are pretty well all we have got. And so far as they go they are good. But they are not good enough. The present chaos, and our pathetic helplessness in the face of it, is the testimony to our futility.

Nor should any one think that in demanding for

the future flexibility of mind we are seeking only an intellectual attitude. There is a spiritual quality involved here. The fact is that what the world of to-morrow needs is more of the spirit of humble inquiry and less of that of doctrinaire certainty. In the old days we knew—oh, so certainly. Had we not been to the university, and gathered there the wisdom of the centuries? Or, if we had not done that, we had something even better—the certainty that is born of experience; and so we said to the eager youngsters who were pressing ahead so impatiently, 'Yes, I thought like that at your age, but when you have lived as long as I have you will get rid of a lot of that nonsense.' I venture to think that the day for the superior person has gone by. What we need to-day is the humility which recognizes that we are all alike seeking for truth, that we are all alike trying to find the will of God, and that we are all of us really quite restricted little beings, and copiously ignorant.

So that the first thing to which I think the future is calling us is to an attitude of mind that is elastic, flexible, capable of learning even when we think we have already learned; the whole rooted in a genuine humility of spirit.

But this is but one side of the truth. I want to put the other side—or at least to remind you that it is there, and to be equally emphatic about it. We do not advance upon the future with entirely empty minds. We have our prepossessions and even our bias! The man who speaks of himself as 'unbiased' does not yet know himself as he ought to know. We are under no such illusion. We are at least biased in favour of truth and honourable living and brotherhood, and a few other things like that. That is to say, there are certain *fixed points* in life for us, however adventurous we may be. In fact, I have never yet heard of an adventure that was merely an adventure and nothing

else—just adventure in general. It was always an adventure directed to a goal, whether the South Pole, or the Mountains of the Moon, or something else. We may find in the future that we have lost our landmarks, but there are still a few stars left in the sky and we shall need something to steer by. There is a great deal of nonsense talked in these days about freedom. Many people seem to think of it as the condition of being entirely unrelated to anything, without either responsibility or obligation. Such a thing is a mere chimera : it has never existed and never can. I remember hearing Dr. Parkes Cadman say some years ago, in words that were perhaps a little jingling but very striking, ' You must be firmly fixed if you would freely float.' No ! the choice we have is not between the freedom to do what we like how we like, and servitude of the spirit. The real choice before us is whether we shall be slaves of circumstance, carried about by every wind of doctrine and superstition and opinion, or servants of the ideal. We can be mere day-labourers in the task of building the future, doing odd little jobs as they occur to us ; or we can be architects, with a clear design in our mind and a comprehensive purpose knitting our work into a whole.

If we are to be the architects of the future we shall have our standards and our values. Where shall we find them ? Some of them we can discover, if we will reflect a little, in the record of man's life and struggles hitherto. Human beings suffer from persistent shortness of memory ; it is a chronic disease, and seems to be endemic to the whole human family ! That is why we ought to read a little history. We shall make fewer mistakes in the future if we know a little more about the past. I am sure we should lose our heads less frequently if we could recognize that some of the more popular of the modern heresies are simply a new edition of ancient errors. There is really no necessity for us to explore

again the blind alleys that men once rejected. Nor is it without importance to discover that some old things have pretty good wearing quality—that simple loyalty is worth more than eloquence, and honour is a greater thing than enthusiasm. And I find it useful to remember that, as Carlyle said somewhere, the gods sell all things at the price of labour, and that John Wesley, for instance, with all his great gifts of persuasive speech and inspired organization, did not disdain hard work. Yes, history has something to say to us about the great values, and it will be a strange future that does not call us to remember the lessons that generations of men have learned through blood and tears.

But we need not go even so far afield, for some of the great stars by which we need to steer shine in our own minds. F. W. Robertson of Brighton once addressed a great meeting of working men in a public hall in Brighton, and used these memorable words: 'In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain: If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward.' Those words were uttered nearly a hundred years ago. They are still true, and I can conceive no future that can belie them. Let us keep our minds flexible; let youth go out upon its adventures; let us make our experiments. But let us have our standards. If the old ones are not good enough, let us get others that are better. But let us be on our guard against having none. For a life without standards is not life; it is but a decorated futility. In a very frank discussion of the problems of the 'New Generation' a lady writer describes with insight and sympathy a modern young people's party in New York. The youngsters were not bad, she says, but they were all at sea. They had no standards. That

is what made it pathetic. For, when standards go, self-respect goes with them. It is not possible even to have a good time without some standards.

However vast the changes that are sweeping over us, and however confusing the days that are yet to come, we live in a moral universe, and we can still steer by the light of its great suns.

The Call : (2) Action

It is well that we should first decide our *attitude* to the future. But more than that is necessary if we are to justify our entrance upon that vast stage. There are certain tasks awaiting us. These are so numerous that we can only treat of them in broad and general terms.

The first thing is undoubtedly to make fraternity a real thing. Hitherto the community of men has organized itself for attack and defence in little groups with hard edges. Such groups were called by various names—nations, classes, churches, and so on. Some were large, some small ; but all were meant to be exclusive. They shut out as well as shut in. Each had its shibboleths, and all were inclined to be rather touchy about their dignity. They served their turn, and no one will deny their usefulness. But the future beckons us to something broader. Somehow we have to find our way to a richer fellowship. We have dreamed about a brotherhood of man, and little coteries, however cosy, put us off with a good deal less than that. We have to re-build a world on a basis of friendliness. Man is a friendly being, and the world as we know it mocks his deepest instincts. The task is colossal, but a world of divided and often hostile encampments is utterly unsatisfying.

In practice we shall, of course, still have our groups, but we shall recognize that all of them serve only a limited purpose. We shall be citizens of the world,

but we shall not cease to be Englishmen—though we shall, I hope, sing 'Rule Britannia' a little less lustily. We shall be Methodists, but only in order that we can be better Christians. We shall still be buyers and sellers, but we shall see the counter as a bridge and not as a battle-ground.

And we shall definitely seek contact with men of other groups. For that reason we shall knock a few holes in our dividing walls and make it more easy for men to go in and come out. We shall also have to lower the walls so that we can see the world more easily. We shall be less afraid of a man because he wears a different symbol or speaks a different idiom. And we shall certainly give a more cordial welcome to the stranger. Not only shall we go out of our way to ask the stranger in and to make him at home, but we shall listen with respect to those who speak a language that is not ours. We shall be prepared to entertain new points of view and not merely anxious to refute. And we shall remember, I hope, that our cities are full of lonely men who are craving for fellowship and too shy or too disheartened to go out and seek it.

But none of these things shall we be able to do unless our aims are right. The demands of human fellowship need to be thought out again, not in general terms, but in the context of our day and our present conditions. For fellowship is not an abstract sentiment but a concrete bond, clothing itself in flesh-and-blood contacts. We shall have our difficulties, for we live in a social order that pays lip-service to fellowship and pursues divisive ends which contradict it. The Kingdom of Midas will only find fellowship by renouncing its fealty. We shall have to make a good deal less of money and a good deal more of the things that are without money and without price. And we shall need to be constantly on our guard against the pursuit of power and the solicitations of ambition.

If the task of Christian youth is to help to make a Christian England, it will realize that the battle has to be fought, not on the external plane of social reform, important as that is, but in the inner world of loyalties. Somehow or other we must persuade men to worship other gods, and we shall only do that as we cease ourselves to be idolaters. The fact is that we have to carry our standards into practice. I know no one who has expressed this particular demand of the future better than Dr. Herbert Gray. 'The Kingdom of God,' he says, 'has not yet been built, partly because a great many good people have thought of it as something to be worked at in their spare time—on Sundays and in the evenings. It can never be so built. For my part, it seems plain beyond question that the supreme need of Christ to-day is the need of grim and resolute practical men who will enter the arena of ordinary life with the principles of the Kingdom as their marching orders. . . . When we have big business men and big employers and big labour leaders and big financiers and big lawyers whose one aim in life is to set up the Kingdom of God, and that without considering what is going to happen to them, then the Kingdom of God will be getting really near.'

All this will have its effect upon the Church of the future. I yield to no one in my appreciation of what the Church has done, and of the great work it is still doing, in the world. Only those who do not know it from within can contemplate the diminution of its influence without dismay. But those who know it best would be the first to admit that it is after all an instrument for a greater purpose. The fact is, however divine its origin, the Church is an institution, and institutions are tools that men use. No institution and no tool is perfect. It never quite fits its task, so that we are always modifying, developing, improving it. Political thinkers (like Laski) are beginning to tell us

that even the State must justify itself before the bar of man's conscience. So must the Church. Its survival depends upon its ability to meet the moral and spiritual demands of men. For reasons into which we need not enter, the Church of to-day hardly does that. I am not thinking of ' making our services more attractive ' (that feeble counsel of despair), and I am not unduly alarmed by mere statistics, though some of them are disturbing enough. But I am thinking of the fact that men of high moral purpose increasingly stoke the fires of their moral passion elsewhere, and that many men find their genuine spiritual hunger gratified (they tell us better gratified) in other places. If this is so, there is something wrong. One of the tasks of the future is to secure a better adaptation between God's purpose in the world and the Church that is there to promote it. I think we shall have to get more of the spirit of fellowship into religious communities. It is pathetic that there are so many congregations of men and women who remain strangers ; they never see each other except on Sunday nights, and even then their voices mingle but their minds do not engage. I think also that we shall need by some means to bring our religion into closer contact with life. It is so easy for the pulpit to answer questions that no one is asking, but the pulpit would often be grateful if it were allowed to hear men's questions more often than it does. It is possible that the Church of the future will be more federal than we are to-day—with more of the idea of groups united in a common interest and less of the mass meeting. But it is for the youth of to-day to have their say about the Church of to-morrow. Cannot we and they together devise an instrument that shall be more sensitive and more supple than anything we now know ?

One word in conclusion. Human life is a voyage of discovery, and the journey into the future always has

something of romance in it. But some of you will remember a story of G. K. Chesterton's about a man who in his journeyings discovered a delightful island, with magic about its shores and beauty like a bloom upon its fields. What was his surprise to discover that the place at which he had landed was Brighton, and the island England. Let us journey hopefully into the future. There adventure awaits us, and romance, and many great discoveries. But let us not be alarmed if some of the things we discover are the old things that have been familiar to men for generations. It is, after all, not an accident that in a world where the mortality of ideas is a high one, and where the shores of history are littered with the wrecks of lost causes, some ideas have survived and some causes still flourish. It is by no mere chance that Christianity still stands with its high and challenging demands, that in the hunger of their hearts men still cry aloud for God, and that they still turn to Christ to find the way of life. Perhaps if we remember these things we shall find that it is not, after all, merely the future that is beckoning us, but God who is calling us. And, if we do not remember them, we may still go on to discover them.

F. Clifford Taylor.

OFFERTORY.

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Seek ye My face.'

Earth's ten thousand voices
Daily rise and fall ;
But there's one within me
Clearer than them all :
'Tis the voice of Jesus ;
And I do not know
When its tones first sounded,
'Tis so long ago.

At the parting of the ways,
At the crisis of my days,
Thou art calling, calling, calling :
And my heart its Lord obeys.

As the days of childhood
Happily have sped,
Oft the voice has thrilled me :
Follow Me ! it said,
Either in the accents
Of authority,
Or of love sore wounded—
As from Calvary.

Speak, Thy servant heareth ;
Speak whate'er Thou wilt ;
Let me know Thy mercy ;
Let me know my guilt.
Conquer my perverseness ;
Cure me of delay :
Save me, Lord and Saviour ;
Save—this very day.

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III

THE BEGINNING OF OUR FAITH

WHERE shall we begin? What can we be sure about? No sooner have we adjusted our thought to the discoveries and teaching of some bold and original thinker like Charles Darwin, and worked the word 'evolution' into our theological language, than we are called upon to make a fresh readjustment, to offer homage to Freud and Jung, and to talk in terms of 'complexes' and 'the unconscious.' We have scarcely recovered from our dazzlement at the brilliance of one scientist's pronouncement before we are staggered by another which contradicts it. Only those can be complacent who confine their interests within definite and narrow boundaries. If your work and thought are concerned with one specific science or with its application to practical uses, you may persuade yourself that you have reached certainty so long as you close your eyes to the wider implications of your science or to the moral effects of its practical utilization. You may give yourself to your business and to the accumulation of the means of physical comfort and security, and try not to bother yourself with these ultimate questions of God and morality; only there will be times when there will arise questions as to the principles upon which your business should be conducted, and then you must either think for yourself or borrow your principles from those who do. Complacency, you see, is only to be had by cultivating a certain blindness, by shutting your eyes to things which have a way of clamouring for attention. This is the modern Pharisaism. It takes the place, for those who do not want to think for themselves, of the old blind acceptance of tradition.

But, for those who are not content with this Pharisaic

way, what is there to rest upon? As soon as we begin to think we become profoundly dissatisfied. We are dissatisfied with the Church, we are dissatisfied with the Government, and perhaps even with democracy; with the condition of industry, and perhaps with Capitalism. We are not even satisfied with ourselves. May we not say that we are really dissatisfied with life, and yet are convinced that it is a glorious possession? We feel that we ought to make something better of it, and yet we do not quite know what. This is far better than complacency. 'The one utter heresy in Christianity,' says Dr. Fosdick, 'is to believe that we have reached finality, and can settle down with a completed system.' But we have to find something other than dissatisfaction to live upon. Most of the public troubles in the world just now are due to the fact that we are breaking up what has proved unsatisfactory, but have not decided what to put in its place. This is the problem of India, the cause of the chaos in China, the subject of experiments in Italy and Russia. Socially and politically our national caution is helping us in this country, and we are anxious to find some better way before we dispense with the old; but meanwhile the old ways and systems are crumbling, and there is some need to hurry with our plans. All this uncertainty cannot be dissociated from the serious disintegration which has befallen morality and religion. Mr. Galsworthy has analysed English thought and sentiment as well as anybody, and in the *Forsyte Saga* he has exposed the limitations and failure of nineteenth-century morality, with its basis in the sanctity of property, while in *A Modern Comedy* he has shown how restless, sad, and futile life is without a working faith. If we remain there—dissatisfied with the imperfect and even selfish morality of the past, yet without a clear faith for the future—our dissatisfaction will prove unhealthy. It will produce a generation of profligates

and neurotics, and their children will have only ruins to begin with.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Only it must yield place to new or there will be nothing but chaos.

In seeking a faith equal to the demands of to-day it is useless to invite our generation to return to precisely the formulations of our fathers, or to acquiesce in the Church as it is to-day. Not only are the temper and judgement of the time against that, but to do so would be to forget that God is a living God, that the universe is a living universe, and that the human race is a living and developing race, far from mature as yet. We have to get behind all formal statements for three reasons. (1) Such statements are apt to be couched in the language and thought-forms of one generation and to be misleading to others. (2) Each generation has the duty to do its own thinking and to state its own conclusions. (3) We shall, in so doing, adopt the method which has proved so fruitful in other directions, which is : first, collect your facts, then try to explain them, and then test your explanation in any way you can. Data, hypothesis, experiment—that is now the approved order. This is not at all inconvenient, because Christianity began, not with a statement, but with a life—in Dr. L. P. Jack's words, ' in something that happened, in a deed that was done, in a life that was lived . . . something to talk about, something worth talking about, was furnished before the talking began.' That is where we shall have to begin ourselves, and, if only we start there, we shall go a very long way. We shall find just what we need—not a final and completed system, accepted to-day and likely to be antiquated to-morrow, but a living spirit, creative, not

adapting itself to changing circumstances, but making circumstances obey its own imperious vision. A zealous and open-minded study of the Gospels, paying all necessary attention to the assured findings of modern criticism, will at least bring us to realize that Jesus Christ offers us the highest wisdom and the holiest life that humanity has yet achieved. We shall soon find that our loyalty begins to attach itself to Him, and that we are interested in the impression He made upon His contemporaries, which is quite a legitimate part of our data. And what had they to say about Him? Peter, the eager, said: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Thomas, the incredulous, said, 'My Lord, and my God.' Paul could say (and this must have been the result of a real experience), 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.' Another said: 'God, who in partial and fragmentary ways spoke to our fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us in His Son, whom He has made heir of all things.' Another said: 'We beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from God, full of grace and truth.'

These testimonies are so differently phrased that they appear to owe nothing to each other, but together they show that He had a transcendent significance for those who were brought into contact with Him. The men who spoke so certainly had something more than disillusionment to live upon. They seem to have had just what we need—convictions about God which were not spun out of metaphysical reasoning, but were mediated to them by what Jesus was; a great purpose outside themselves worth living for, and even worth dying for; ideals of life and character which were a constant challenge to all that was mean, selfish, or foul within themselves; and moral power to serve that purpose and to reach out after those ideals. We cannot

dismiss their faith until we have tested it where they tested it, viz. in experience.

How can we do that? 'The life that I live,' said St. Paul, 'I live by faith in the Son of God.' Suppose we try that. Theoretically we can neither prove nor disprove the affirmations made by the followers of Jesus. Perhaps it is because we have waited for logical certainty that we have lost our way, for logic can only draw out the implications of facts; and we must first get our facts. The most accurate logician will be all at sea if some of the relevant facts are not known to him. Knowledge is the explication of experience, so that if we shut ourselves out from religious experience we simply cannot come at any assured religious knowledge. The only way is for us to begin by trying to follow Jesus—that is, by living as though His revelation of God and His teaching about man and his destiny were true. When we have done that conscientiously we shall be in a position to talk about what we have found.

But if we do that we shall not be any the more satisfied with the Church or with democracy or with industrial and social conditions, but rather less so; only we shall not be in the same state of helpless despair about these things. That, at any rate, is one thing that I can say as a result of my imperfect effort to live 'by faith in the Son of God.' If we, who are still young, will humbly but enthusiastically follow where He leads, we can create under His guidance both a better Church and a better world; for a better Church will mean a better world. The Church's concern is with the world; it should be a redeemed and a redemptive community. It cannot exist for its own sake, because if it makes the attempt it will cease to exist. Nothing really lives except by performing its proper function, and the function of the Church is to create the Kingdom of God within the hearts of men,

and thereby in human society. It is useless to pretend that the Church is perfectly vitalized and organized at present for the fulfilment of that function, yet our duty will not be to point out its defects to others, but to see them for ourselves and to set to work to supply what is lacking.

My own vision of the future Church is something like this. It will, of course, consist of men and women devoted to the service of Christ in this world, and seeking to accomplish His Will here. They will know that this is so vast and complicated a business that it can only be done by each one, with all his heart and mind and strength, attending to some aspect of it ; but they will also know that the body has many members, and each member has not the same function, though one Spirit directs and co-ordinates the whole. Each will therefore find his job, while taking a sympathetic interest in the activities of the others. Some will accept the task of creating an informed and determined Christian opinion regarding international relationships, so that the Church may stand as an inviolable bulwark between humanity and war. Some will find a special interest in the call to serve the children, and in preparing themselves for the most efficient service in the Sunday School they will secure their own spiritual development. Others will see that social and industrial problems are really insoluble by politicians whose eyes are on the tactics of party warfare, or by economists who take insufficient account of the moral and spiritual interests which industry and social organization are meant to serve ; and these will seek to form a Christian judgement on all these questions—a Christian judgement which politicians will not only find it impossible to ignore, but by which they will be glad to be guided.

In the pursuit of these and other tasks we shall find in the teaching of Jesus certain guiding principles which

bind them all together and provide us with a high moral imperative. Of these principles I will mention one—a supremely important one. The study of the Gospels, from whatever angle it is pursued, will convince us that Jesus insisted upon the sanctity of personality. That is why He said, 'There is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repents,' and therein we have our mandate to make known to others what we have proved in experience of the saving power of a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Again He said, 'A greater than the Temple is here,' because no institution, not even the Church, is more sacred than human personality. And when He said, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ye did it unto Me,' He affirmed that it is only in serving humanity that we can serve Him.

When we have realized this sanctity of personality we shall have a constant test to apply to every proposal for social or industrial change, viz. this—will it serve the real interests of the spiritual life of man? But more than that; there will be no difficulty about morals, which will be seen to be no mere matter of social convention or of the prohibitions of a Mrs. Grundy. In the light of this principle, no obscenity can then be tolerated, and when obscenity finds no approval and no market it will cease to be produced. Marriage, as a life-long compact between two persons themselves inherently sacred, will cease to be lightly regarded. In all our relationships with others we shall know that, being in the presence of what is sacred, any abuse, any defrauding of rights, is sacrilege against the Most High. We shall have high and compelling reason for respecting our own minds and bodies, and for making the utmost use of the faculties which are ours.

The faith of this generation may therefore begin just where the faith of the first disciples began—not with an

affirmation about Christ, but with devotion to Him. Any faith, which is worked out in loyalty to that, will not fail in the stress of life. Any attempt to know the 'mind of Christ' on any subject will bring us into touch with His own redeeming Spirit. Let us begin there, where the enterprise of the Kingdom of God first began, with our own personal response to His call, 'Follow Me.'

F. A. Farley.

SERVICE OF DEDICATION.

Tune : 'Maryton.'

I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

We love Him, because He first loved us.

The Lord is King! I own His power,
His right to rule each day and hour;
I own His claim on heart and will,
And His demands I would fulfil.

Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

He claims my heart, to keep it clean
From all defiling taint of sin ;
He claims my will, that I may prove
How swift obedience answers love.

Fight the good fight of faith ; lay hold on eternal life. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

He claims my hands for active life
In noble deeds and worthy strife ;
He claims my feet that in His ways,
I may walk boldly all my days.

Study to show thyself approved unto God—a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

He claims my lips, that purest word
In all my converse may be heard,
My motives, passions, thoughts, that these,
My inner life, my King may please.

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report : if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

He claims the brightness of my youth,
My earnest strivings after truth,
My joys, my toil, my craftsman's skill;
All have their place, and serve His will.

Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

O Lord my King! I turn to thee;
Thy Loyal service makes me free;
My daily task, Thou shalt assign;
For heart, and will, and life are Thine.

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BENEDICTION.

IV

THE MEANING OF SIN

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The contemplation of the perfect Personality of Jesus becomes the first element in the evangelical meaning of sin. For it is in personal contact with Jesus Christ, in whose holy character and self-forgetting love man recognizes the true ideal for his own character and conduct, that the true nature of sin is disclosed. In the transition from the vision of his ideal self to the experience, familiar to his actual self, of constant failure to become what he ought to be, the evangelical sense of sin comes to birth. The meaning of sin, therefore, is determined by the relation of personality to other personalities, divine and human. We must stress the reality of sin as personal. There is no such thing as sin, apart from a sinner. Sin is any and all unloving attitudes towards God and man, a disposition and activity of the self. Moreover, it is always against a standard expressed in personality, rather than against an external law, or even against an impersonal moral order.

When the consequences of sin are stated in terms that set forth their effects in personality, they best escape from the circle of age-long controversy and speculation regarding the traditional penalties of sin. Insistence on these has, in more recent years, tended to weaken the evangelical appeal through a sense of hesitation and misgiving, and even of unreality. At the same time, the dread desolations of sin in the degradation of human personality present us with an aspect of 'the terror of the Lord' which must ever be a stern reality in evangelical religion. Such consequences of sin may be more subtle, but they are not less terrible in their severity, nor less certain in their incidence, than penalties set forth in external or future acts of retribution.

The deepening conviction, sustained by psychological and philosophical authority, that personality cannot be regarded as the equivalent of individuality has considerable significance for evangelical religion. Personality is best defined as fellowship. No person is or can be unrelated. We exist as personalities in and through our relations with others. That personality is richest which sustains effectually the widest and most intimate relations with other personalities. Hence no man can sin, and restrain the consequences of his transgression within the circle of his own personality. These consequences register themselves in the ethical and spiritual world-order. The tendency of sin is to perpetuate itself. Social sin is a reality. There is corporate guilt attaching to sin. Every man is his brother's keeper. Both through direct inheritance and through the environment they create, the consequences of an individual's sin affect his fellows. Evils that blight the present social order are a resultant of the sins of our fathers. Behind them lies an inheritance of social sin from even the remote past. It constitutes an environment of evil which is the ceaseless allurement to sin for every fresh soul facing the tests of moral character and choice.

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Moscow.'

Come, Holy Ghost, in love,
Shed on us from above
Thine own bright ray :
Divinely good Thou art,
Thy sacred gifts impart
To gladden each sad heart ;
O come to-day.

Come, tenderest Friend, and best,
Our most delightful Guest,
With soothing power ;
Rest which the weary know,
Shade 'mid the noontide-glow,
Peace when deep griefs o'erflow ;
Cheer us this hour.

Come, Light serene and still,
Our inmost bosoms fill,
Dwell in each breast ;
We know no dawn but Thine,
Send forth Thy beams divine,
On our sad souls to shine,
And make us blest.

Exalt our low desires,
Extinguish passion's fires ;
Heal every wound ;
Our stubborn spirits bend,
Our icy coldness end,
Our devious steps attend,
While heavenward bound.

Come, all the faithful bless ;
Let all who Christ confess
His praise employ ;
Give virtue's rich reward,
Victorious death accord,
And with one glorious Lord
Eternal joy. Amen.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

Sin before God	Ps. li. 3–4
Sin indwelling	Rom. vii. 15–25
Sin's Convincer	John xvi. 7–12

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'St. Cuthbert,'

Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell.

He came in tongues of living flame,
To teach, convince, subdue ;
All-powerful as the wind He came,
As viewless too.

He comes sweet influence to impart,
A gracious, willing Guest,
While He can find one humble heart
Wherein to rest.

And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of heaven.

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone.

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see ;
O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
And worthier Thee.

O praise the Father ; praise the Son ;
Blest Spirit, praise to Thee :
All praise to God, the Three in One,
The One in Three !

I

SIN—A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

THERE is a story told of ex-President Coolidge the immediate purpose of which was to illustrate what is said to have been his habitual economy of speech. On returning home from worship on one occasion he was asked by his wife who had been preaching. When this information had been given, she said, 'And what was the subject of his sermon?' 'Sin,' replied her husband. 'And what view did the preacher take of it?' she asked. 'He was against it,' said Mr. Coolidge. Well, we in our conception and proclamation of religious duty are against sin, and it is my business to show why. I would remark, first of all, that sin is a term which is relevant to personal relations. The act which it describes must be *the act of a person.* One can conceive of certain undesirable happenings which, if they were occasioned by human agency, would be labelled as sinful, being brought about by other than human beings. A man may set fire to a house; so also may a flash of lightning. A criminal may kill a human being; so also may a man-eating tiger. The situations produced are in each of these cases exactly the same; a house is burnt and a human being is killed. But we judge them differently because of the difference in the causes which produced them. We speak of the action of the lightning or the tiger as unfortunate or regrettable or distressing; we describe that of the men as sinful, because they bring to their conduct something which does not belong to lightning or tiger—the quality of personality. Sin is the act of a person.

Moreover, it is *directed against a person.* This second aspect of it, however, unlike the first, is not one which is instinctively apprehended; it represents, rather, an

advanced stage of religious reflection. Indeed, it is possible to have, and human language actually has had, terms applied to sin which lie outside the sphere of religion altogether. We speak of 'vice' or 'vices,' meaning to describe thereby certain acts or habits which, from the point of view of our nature, are injurious to it and a perversion of its true uses. Sin there is interpreted in ethical terms, and reflection on it does not pass beyond the nature which the 'vice' impairs.

We speak also of 'evils.' Thought there is moving in the realm of human conditions, and it is contemplating experiences which represent interferences with, or departures from, true happiness or well-being. Things are pronounced 'evil' because they are looked at in the light of the unhappy condition which they have produced. Terms like these belong to the spheres of philosophy and ethics, and there are some systems of thought claiming to be religious which do not pass beyond them in their conceptions of sin. Buddhism, for example, beyond the extent to which it has deified Buddha himself, has no personal God. It is a system of fatalism. It regards man as in the grasp of a vast impersonal machine, whose reactions upon him, though they are often distressing in their consequences, he is powerless to arrest or resist. Quite naturally, therefore, Buddhism, with this basic conception, thinks of miseries or ills rather than sins, and the only salvation which it has to offer consists in the cessation of existence altogether. The idea of God is necessary to the notion of sin. Sin is a religious term. It, as Dr. Fairbairn has said, 'has no meaning without God and His purpose concerning man.'

And so, in order to understand it, we must step within the sphere of religion, and specifically within that of the Christian religion. Indeed, Dr. Fairbairn declares that sin, properly understood and defined, is 'an express and peculiar creation of Christianity.

No other religion knows it or has its precise equivalent.' One cannot pursue that contention except to say that to call sin ' a specifically Christian notion ' may seem to ignore the large contribution which the Old Testament made to the Biblical doctrine of sin. We must look at that for a moment. We must do so, however, keeping before our minds the ultimate conception of sin as the offence of a person against a Person. Does the Old Testament consistently rise to that? Now the great Biblical term for the kind of goodness in conduct and disposition which is expected from us by God is ' righteousness.' It is a term common to both Testaments. St. Paul, in his pre-Christian days, in his passionate anxiety to be right with God, was seeking a righteousness which was of the Law, i.e. one which consisted in the fulfilment of its manifold precepts. Christ, too, spoke of righteousness when He was defining the moral ideal. His followers were to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness. But, though the terms are the same, their content differs. The word translated ' righteousness ' in our New Testament means primarily conformity to a standard. In that sense it is found applied to secular things and behaviour. In Egypt, e.g. men used to talk of a ' righteous ' rise of the Nile, meaning such an overflow of its waters as came up to the normal standard. That fundamental meaning is retained when the word passes into the vocabulary of religion. Righteousness is conformity to some prescribed standard. Everything, therefore, so far as its content is concerned, depends on what the standard happens to be. It is there that the New Testament marks an advance upon the Old, Christianity upon Judaism. It is elementary truth to say that Christ lifted the moral ideal. ' They of old time said . . . But I say . . .'—that is how He points the contrast between the old ideal and the new. From the point of view of the standard of goodness

required Christ made religion a finer and a more difficult thing. He declared that righteousness has to be not merely outward and formal, but inward and spiritual. It must embrace not only acts, but motives and dispositions. Life must be put right at the centre, and the springs of conduct must be cleansed.

Now in making this heightened demand it is only fair to the Old Testament to say that Jesus was not wholly original. He had in some measure been anticipated by the finest souls of the previous Dispensation. Jeremiah had dreamed of a time when the divine requirements, His law, would be written in the heart, and devout psalmists who had imbibed the prophetic spirit could pray, as does the author of Psalm li. : ' Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' Even the Law, in spite of the outward formality of most of its precepts, did not wholly lack this element of inwardness, for in that wonderful fragment of religious autobiography which St. Paul gives us in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle tells us that when, in his quest for righteousness by obedience to the precepts of the Law, he came one day to the commandment, ' Thou shalt not covet,' that word, like a vivid lightning flash, revealed a whole world of disposition and motive within him which was alien to the mind of God, and he saw how hopeless were his own efforts to gain the righteousness which he sought. Hence Christ in this aspect of His teaching was not wholly new. It was in the emphasis which He laid upon the inward, and the range which He made it cover, that Christ's doctrine of righteousness was an advance upon what had gone before.

But that, though important, was, after all, Christ's least service to the moral ideal. A much more significant thing was that He brought it out of the legal into the personal realm. He personalized the moral ideal. Goodness, He said, consists in being like God.

'Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' That, in the sense which Jesus read into it, is the last, because the highest, word in religious duty. It is true that even there Christ was only carrying to the ultimate a principle which had appeared even in Old Testament religion. Israel had always felt that Yahweh was ethical in His demands. God's gracious disclosure of Himself had issues for human conduct. As the vision of God broke upon the eyes of the prophets, and they realized one after another with growing clearness the awful purity and righteousness of God, they declared with growing emphasis what all this meant for His people. What God was, they said, His people had to be. A holy and righteous God required a holy and righteous people. 'Be ye holy,' was the divine demand, 'for I am holy.' It is true that the legal system with its multitudinous round of outward precepts, with its reiteration of 'Do this, and do this, and do this,' had obscured that personal mode of conceiving moral duty. Christ restored it. He brought men face to face with God. There, He said, in what God is, is what you have to be. And, of course, the tremendous significance of all this was that, when men looked at God through Christ's eyes, they saw something there which they had not seen before, or had only seen but dimly. They discovered that love was the greatest thing in God—not holiness or righteousness, but love; that it was the loving heart of God which was His crowning glory, and that men did not know God till they knew that; that the perfection of God meant perfection in love, and that the tenderest of all human names, 'Father,' was the only one which rightly described Him. That was God, and what the Father was the son had to be—perfect in loving as God was. That was the new, the revolutionary word, which Jesus spoke on human duty; that was the moral ideal which He set up for men.

One further word is needed to make my exposition of Christ's teaching complete. He does not simply make love the content and standard of goodness ; He makes love that in God which imposes and requests it. That fact creates a tremendous difference. Had love been merely in the moral ideal, we might almost have regretted that Christ had spoken, for by His heightening of the standard of duty we should have felt that He had made its attainment the more impossible. But the gracious truth is that it is love also which appeals to us. It is our Father who says, 'My son, try to be like Me.' The voice which speaks to us is not that of our King, but the voice of our Father. It is not authority which commands, but love which woos. We are out of the realm of law ; we are in the sphere of the home. Religion is not only given a new meaning ; it is set in a new atmosphere. It is made harder and yet easier ; harder in what it asks, but easier in that which disposes us to give. Duty is transfigured into delight. The yoke becomes easy and the burden light because we shoulder them for love's dear sake. That is religion and religious duty as Jesus expounds it—a relationship of filial love to a loving God. And if I seem all this long while to have been away from my subject, and to have been speaking about goodness rather than about sin, my plea is that it is only by way of the understanding of goodness that we reach the true understanding of sin. Sin is the negation of what love is and the refusal of what love claims. It is more than doing wrong things ; it is being wrong. It is the son refusing to be a son, disowning his sonship, deserting his true home, and turning his back upon his Father. It is not caring enough about God to do His will ; it is, as Dr. Fairbairn says in words that I cannot better, 'the reign of unfilial feeling in the heart which was made for filial love.' Sin is the refusal or violation of true personal relations. It is the offending of a person

—man, against the holiest and most gracious of all persons—God.

And therein lies its heinousness. That is a fact which supplies a real problem to us who are preachers of Christ's gospel. How are we to get the evangelical view of sin across, to bring home to the mind and conscience the tremendous gravity of sin? It has been said that men in these modern days are not troubling greatly about their sins. That, I am afraid, is largely true. How are we to arouse the sleeping or drugged conscience? Well, not, I would say, by mere denunciation. No one ever deepened the sense of sin in those who heard Him as Jesus did, and yet He spoke a great deal more about goodness than He did about sin. It is quite true that He had words of stinging rebuke for Pharisees and formalists. 'Hypocrites,' 'play-actors,' 'whited sepulchres,' He called them, because only by such biting speech could He pierce their self-complacency and stir them to reflect on their spiritual condition. With other people Christ pursued a different method. He spoke to them, not of sin, but of righteousness. He told them what God was and what they as His children had to be. He held up the moral ideal; He taught it and lived it, and in that mirror men saw themselves, and by contrast realized their sin. Just as it was the ineffable vision of God in the Temple and the chanting by angelic voices of the divine holiness which caused the sense of sin to awake in the breast of Isaiah and to creep even to his lips, so in the presence of Christ, and through His words of grace, sin came to judgement. He revealed sin by expounding goodness. Men saw what they were by learning what they ought to be. That way of Jesus has a message for us. We must go and do likewise.

And then all sin, as we have seen, is sin against God. What does that mean in face of the love of God? It is a great thing to be able to say to any man, even the

blackest, the vilest, the most degraded, 'God loves you.' We can say it because it is true. Yes, but what does sin—their sin, our sin—mean to the loving heart of God? It means that God suffers because He loves. That is what love involves in the presence of sin; it is the price which sin always makes love pay. It is so with human love, and that is why there is a shadow at this moment on many a home, and godly parents are eating their hearts out because of the wrongdoing of those whom they love. And if that is true of our poor human selves, how much more must it be true of God? Love always suffers where there is sin, and the greater the love the greater the suffering. Is not that the truth which lies at the heart of the Cross? We speak of the suffering of Christ, but what is meant by that? Not the pain of His body, unutterably keen though that must have been. No! it was suffering of soul, the suffering of love on account of sin. For Christ loved the nation which had rejected Him, He loved those rulers who had condemned Him, and the rejection and crucifixion meant that perfect goodness was treated as a thing evil, so evil that it must be violently thrust out of existence; perfect love was rewarded with hate. That was the sin of sins; it was the wickedest thing that men have ever done. And the realization of its awful character laid on the loving soul of Jesus a burden of intolerable anguish, so that He literally died of a broken heart. Yes, Christ suffered because He loved, and in the suffering Christ we have a window which lets us see into the suffering heart of God. The Cross is more than a fact of history; it is a symbol of something eternal in the heart of God. God suffers when man sins. Sin does more than offend a Sovereign, it grieves a Father. Oh! if we could only make men realize that! I wish we could have seen the face of Jesus when He 'turned and looked on Peter.' What did that renegade apostle read in the face of his Master?

Sorrow? Yes, a sorrow which seemed to say, 'You, Peter? And this?' And yet there was love too. It was that look of wounded love on the face of Christ which woke Peter's better self and filled him with shame, and sent him out into the darkness to wash away his sin with penitential tears. The suffering which sin inflicts upon God—we must preach that.

And, lastly, there is the suffering which sin entails upon the sinner. Somehow with the fading of belief in a hell of literal fire and of endless torment this consideration has lost its appeal, and we have found no satisfactory way as yet of restoring it. 'Berry, tell me this,' said Dr. Dale once to his friend Dr. Berry, 'Why is it that no one fears God nowadays?' One explanation is that evangelical preaching has lost the warning note. And yet that was in St. Paul's message, and it was the fact that, as we may translate, he knew 'how God was to be feared' which was one of his main incentives in persuading men to be reconciled to God. We need to restore that note to our preaching, but to express it in a new way. Our preaching has been defective because our theology has been at fault. We have rightly enthroned love at the very heart of God, but too often we have failed to see that holiness and love go together, and that we can only have perfection of love in a Being who is also morally perfect. Love has often been thought of in isolation, and it has been interpreted as infinite good nature, an obliging sentimentality, a flabby emotion. You remember the lines in Omar Khayyám:

> 'Why,' said another, 'some there are who tell
> Of One who threatens He will toss to Hell
> The luckless Pots He marr'd in making—Pish!
> He's a Good Fellow, and 't will all be well.'

Alas! that is often love as it is in us, but it is not love as it exists in God. That is a caricature of God. It is

a conception which is as dangerous as it is false. The love of God is always ethically controlled. The divine attributes do not operate in separate compartments. God's love and His holiness are not at cross purposes. Both are expressed in His attitude to sin and the sinner. The love of God always has moral concern. We sing of it as a love 'that will not let us go.' Yes, and it is a love that will not let us off. 'Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing'—that is divine love speaking as well as divine justice. If we take 'hell' as a symbol for the undesirable consequences of transgression, it is not the creation of the devil. It is created by God, and, rightly understood, it is an expression, not merely of His holiness, but of His love—of that love which is ever seeking the true welfare of the being loved, and is strong and gracious enough even to permit or inflict suffering when that is the only way by which God's loving purpose can be achieved. That is the Person against whom we offend, and that is the significance of His moral perfection for human sin.

A. L. Humphries.

A Litany of Confession.

Let us pray :

Holy Spirit ! pity me,
Pierced with grief for grieving Thee ;
Present, though I mourn apart,
Listen to a wailing heart.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Sins unnumbered I confess,
Of exceeding sinfulness ;
Sins against Thyself alone,
Only to Omniscience known :

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Deafness to Thy whispered calls,
Rashness midst remembered falls,
Transient fears beneath the rod,
Treacherous trifling with my God ;

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Tasting that the Lord is good,
Pining then for poisoned food ;
At the fountains of the skies
Craving creaturely supplies ;

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Worldly cares at worship-time ;
Grovelling aims in works sublime ;
Pride, when God is passing by ;
Sloth, when souls in darkness die ;

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Chilled devotions, changed desires,
Quenched corruption's earlier fires ;—
Sins like these my heart deceive,
Thee, who only know'st them, grieve.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

O how lightly have I slept
With Thy daily wrongs unwept,
Sought Thy chidings to defer,
Shunned the wounded Comforter.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Woke to holy labours fresh
With the plague-spot in my flesh,
Angel seemed to human sight,
Stood a leper in Thy light !

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Still Thy comforts do not fail,
Still Thy healing aids avail ;
Patient Inmate of my breast,
Thou art grieved, yet I am blessed.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

O be merciful to me,
Now in bitterness for Thee !
Father, pardon through Thy Son
Sins against Thy Spirit done !

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

II

SIN—ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR PERSONALITY

'*Wherefore they are punished by leading a life suited to that to which they are assimilated.*'—Plato (*Theaetetus*).

To get a hearing for our message, the first thing we have to do is to convince people that we are dealing with realities, not bogies invented by priests in the Dark Ages, or hallucinations of warped minds.

The 'sin obsession,' like the fear obsession, we have been lately told, is something that may be dispelled by wider knowledge; indeed, it is alleged, it must be utterly dispelled in order that the radiance of the gospel may shine forth again after a long eclipse. (Dr. Percy Dearmer, in *Affirmations*: *The Sin Obsession*, Benn, 1928.)

Now it is historically true that the religious revival of the eighteenth century (not to speak of earlier revivals) put its grip upon men's consciences by an amazing 'conviction of sin' by which a thoughtless man was arrested in the mid-course of his secular life, his cock-fighting and what-not; and, after a period of misery, sometimes accompanied by audible groanings and even convulsions, he found deliverance and entered upon a new life. There does appear to be a disparity between the sense of sin aroused by the mighty preachers of the religious movements and the attitude of us moderns who sit down to discuss 'ethics.' Wherein lies the difference?

Since those days human consciousness has been flooded by two new factors which have come to stay: one is the scientific view of the universe and man's relation thereto; the other is the sense of social relationship, of individual incompleteness, of solidarity. It

is not to be assumed that all men everywhere are familiar with the doctrines of natural science and of sociology, but it is none the less true that sufficient common knowledge has emanated from the sciences to permeate the common consciousness, and no religious teaching can any longer affect men deeply and permanently that has not come to terms with these factors. By ' coming to terms ' we do not mean surrendering to, or even assimilating, any particular scientific or sociologic theories ; we mean, rather, facing the facts with which these sciences deal. A private salvation, which secures the individual in this world and the next, exonerating him from participating in the tasks of this life and the burdens of his fellow men, is the parody of the gospel for which social enthusiasts have often mistaken the gospel. On the other hand, the great social enthusiasms of our time have had their birth and receive their drive from the moral intuition that we are members one of another.

Let us first confront the evolutionary view of the universe. Dr. Dearmer says, ' The discoveries of Darwin have torn the sin doctrine to shreds ' (p. 25, *The Sin Obsession*). By the ' discoveries of Darwin ' he no doubt means : (1) the evolutionary origin of the various forms of living things ; (2) the culmination of this process of evolution in the creature man.

Now, as to the fact of the relationship of all living things, students of nature with practical unanimity admit it. The concept of the universal kinship helps them to understand the forms and habits of the creatures. The crux of the evolution problem, however, lies in its meaning.

Stated briefly, Charles Darwin's view of evolution—as proceeding mainly by means of a struggle for existence and a survival of the fittest—empties the universe of its meaning. All the myriad ' adaptations ' of organs and forms, which have the appearance of

being ' made for ' the purpose which they fulfil, have come into being, according to Charles Darwin, by the accumulation of chance variations. Darwinism is in reality an endeavour to show how the appearances of mind may have come into being without the instrumentality of mind. And the whole amazing apparent progress, from unicellulars to man, upon which so many thinkers have been ready to rest the whole case for ' purpose,' is, according to the strict Darwinian theory, only an accumulation of chances, without guidance or goal.

Now, against this view must be set another—equally justified in calling itself evolutionary—which sees in every step that has been taken by evolving life the purposeful striving of the creature. It is the peculiar and essential characteristic of life that it can respond. Even the unicellulars can learn by experience, and embody that experience in themselves. Now, whilst the method by which the creatures pass on by heredity the modifications which they have acquired is still unknown, it is becoming increasingly evident that no intelligible mode of evolution is available unless in some manner (yet to be discovered) acquirements are conserved. This is evolution indeed, but not Darwinism. But if this should be the manner of evolution, then the universe is one in which the creatures are learning by experience, reaping what they sow, whether unto death or unto life ; it is, in short, what religion calls a ' probationary ' universe.

Whilst bearing in mind that our statement of the evolutionary view must be limited to the smallest possible compass, mention must still be made of a third turn of the great debate, viz., the new view as to the part played by environment. The environment is not indifferent to evolving life. The fitness of the composition of this sample world for the coming of life is so amazing when studied in detail, cosmically, physically,

and chemically, that is has become difficult, if not impossible, to withhold the admission that it was made for life. Again, in the successive changes through the geological ages there is manifested the necessary counterpart for progressively richer forms of being. Environment and species appear as an interacting unity. Thus the position is being reached that the forms of the living creatures are to be understood, not as determined by meaningless chances through vast ages, but rather as the accumulation of significant experiences which have been bonded into the living bodies by the active responses of the creatures. And yet the changes that have come about are not altogether the work of the creature, but rather of the creature working hand in hand with the environment and with structural changes brought about from time to time within the organism of the creature itself as sheer 'gifts' of nature. The Parable of the Talents may indeed represent the truth about the origin of species. All living creatures commencing with initial 'gifts,' and adding thereto (or losing therefrom) by self-activity, sooner or later are 'rewarded' by a sudden accretion of 'help' in the direction of their own striving.

Before we come to look at man, let us fully weigh this account of evolution. It gives us a world fitted indeed for life, and yet a world in which self-development is possible. What the religious view of the universe requires is a world in which experience counts; a world in which the variety and changes of outward circumstances allow of a continuity which conserves experiences in the subjects of living things. The interest and glory of the world of life to the naturalist is that each life-form represents the totality of the experience of all the ages embodied therein. Life is exploring all the avenues open to it, and the innumerable extinct forms represent so many blind ends. Some lines display an ever-widening and enriched experience;

others have followed paths which, after rising to a certain height, are closing in.

The barnacle emerges from its egg and follows a development parallel to that of so highly organized a creature as a shrimp or lobster ; it then (doubtless following the path of its ancestors) fixes itself by the head to rock or pier or ship's bottom, as the case may be, and proceeds henceforth to get its living by kicking its food into its mouth. It thus degenerates into a form comparable to that of a very lowly shell-fish. Mark, we have not yet come to deal with man, or with the moral life that is peculiarly his. But, since it is alleged that the evolutionary view has ' torn the doctrine of sin to shreds,' it is necessary to show that in this world of ours, in which we are but late-comers, the consequences of individual action do appear to have been embodied in modes of life and habit, with entailed consequences, leading either to death and extinction or to ever-expanding life.

It ought to be said at this point that with a very large proportion of living creatures it would appear that the formation of the habits of life by which their structure is to be interpreted occurred in the long ago ; that the plastic stage was the youth of the species, and that of many forms it is probably true to say that their bolt is shot, and such habits as were formed are reduced to automatic or instinctive reactions incorporated in organs fitted to perform them. Thus the ants entrapped in the resin of the pine-trees of the Oligocene age (of perhaps five million years ago), and embalmed in the Baltic amber, have not altered, even to a hair. Such forms as are known to have attained to a stability, and remained throughout geological time, are called ' permanent species.'

Now let us come to man. For twenty thousand years the body of man has not perceptibly altered. No attitude that we may take must be allowed to close our

minds to any possible discoveries, but there is much to be said for regarding man as a ' permanent species.' That is to say, physically his evolution has reached its term ; whilst his physical fitness must be maintained, human evolution is now on other lines altogether. There is good reason for believing that man came of a stock that had never turned its back on communal life ; which had carried the principle of parental care to a further length than any other stock, through the prolongation of the period of infancy ; and, above all, which had never specialized, as the majority of the other mammals have done, in instinctive ways of living, as manifested in the modification of limbs and teeth. Thus the way to humanity was kept open. Provided at length with an adequate instrument for registering causes and effects, and for associating ideas, a rational selfhood that reflects the Reason implicit in the cosmos awakes.

But there may have been something as dramatic in the coming of man as the birth of a child. For we should be fools obsessed if we sought light upon man's essential characteristics from the animal world. It is the distinctive feature of man that he is aware of certain ideal aims. Not even the average secular person can escape them. And according to his response thereto comes his happiness or misery.

Now, when it is roundly stated that the evolutionary view of man's origin has torn the Christian doctrine of sin to shreds it is probable that the reference is to the dogma of the ' fall of man ' and the implication that the human race has in some fashion missed its way. Only a naïve believer in the nineteenth-century doctrine of necessary progress would contradict the possibility of this. When nature has provided any creature with some organ or faculty for increased mastery or a wider life, and the creature by neglect allows that organ or faculty to fall into disuse, there is a case of incipient

degeneracy. Such a turning aside and harking back from the standard of his true nature in man is sin, and the entailed consequences of sin are certain in their effect upon human personality. An act of sin brings certain punishment, registered in the self if not in the body. A sinful habit brings certain degeneracy and decay, and, whilst the whole story of human personality is not comprised in our earthly life, the analogy of nature endorses the dictum of the universal wisdom that the end of sin is death.

In the Christian view of the world, the universe is a school of souls, and the goal is the attainment of personality. What personality is is a matter for learning, and not to be taken as something known. A false conception of personality is prevalent, as if it consisted in peculiarities of an individual. In truth, personality is enriched in proportion as the individual finds his life in others. The sublime conception of Christianity is that personality is only reached when the individual finds his true self in conscious communion with Christ. The divine purpose in the universe is 'to sum up all things in Christ.' The triumph of life over death, of good over evil, is secured as that fellowship is attained, and human individuality is lifted into Divine Personality, and thereby made independent of the fate of the physical body and the terrestrial globe. The intuitions of the profoundest minds of antiquity of the unity of creation in its ordeal of pain and death (e.g. Virgil) are responded to by the promise of the 'redemption of creation.' The travail of creation will have issued in the birth of the sons of God united in a divine society over which death nor space nor time nor matter have any power. This Christian view of the meaning of the world and its processes is untouched by anything that science has said or may say.

There is no need to take an exaggeratedly high view of pristine man; but it is certainly the view of many

sociologists that man for the great period before history was a communal being, the individual being solid with his group. With the awakening of individuality came the emergence of selfishness, and with it war and slavery. The primitive urges—hunger, sex, comradeship—all have their rightful fulfilment in a social harmony, reflected in the myth of a paradise lost or idealized in a hope of a Messianic kingdom yet to come. The individual man is a fragment ; he belongs to a Whole to which he cannot find the way. Nothing is more certain than that the natural man needs deliverance. Conscience, which is man's intuition of his divine goal, has been defined as the call of the whole to the part ; but unless a hand is stretched out he cannot respond. That Whole which calls to the lost individual is no longer the tribe, or the nation of his birth, or even the human race as a whole. It is true that the human race is being lifted into a unity of thoughts and ideals and economic life, tributary to which are the contributions of all lands and all ages. But this does not exhaust the Whole that calls to man. For the old doctrine that man is a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm yields us its truth again. The Logos or Divine Personality of which the order of the universe is a manifestation, and whose delight is in the sons of man, speaks again to us moderns as the Redeemer God by whose infinite patience and self-giving we are being won to our true destiny.

From this standpoint sin is seen to be resistance to the Divine Plan and Will. Sin is essentially taking a lower course when a higher way is open to us. Test this definition by reviewing the kinds of sin. Selfishness (our true nature is social). The ' flesh ' (our true nature is not merely animal). Sins of habit (a voluntary dethronement of the will). Worldliness (the relinquishing of the life of spiritual endeavour). In each case sin is seen to be a setting of lower values over

higher ; of chaos ever cosmos, matter over spirit, body over soul, earthly over heavenly, self over the Kingdom of God.

Our answer to the modern mind, when it asks us whether we are justified in still speaking about the enormity of sin in view of present-day conceptions, is that the whole resistance and inertia of man to the Purpose of the Universe is what we mean by sin. When we address the free-thinking mind of the twentieth century we say that if we are believers in evolution, then the goal of evolution appears to be personality ; but, apart from evolution altogether, this is what the Christian message has declared to be the divine purpose. Sin, which in the New Testament language is missing the mark, is such action as injures personality, culminating in its destruction. Therefore an individual or a society which drops the conception of sin has taken the first step toward dissolution. All shutting of the eyes to truth, all complacency with a social order that largely negates the meaning of the world for many, the greed and hardness that fulfils itself in individual ease and pride and not in service, as well as those coarser vices which make sense pleasures an end and not a means to wider life—such things thwart the destiny of the race ; they tend to the destruction of personality and the frustration of the goal of the universe.

Sin is thus the defeat of God. Is not this what Calvary depicts ? Looking at that Cross, the individual knows that his private struggle is one with the cosmic struggle, and that the last word is not with sin and death.

It is just at this point that the evangelical preaching makes its most direct challenge to the modern mind. The interpretation of the universe in terms of personality is its most daring subject ; a personal God as its source, and a redeemed and personal community as

its goal. Whilst other forms of religion bear witness to the truth of retribution (as most notably the Hindu doctrine of Karma) that actions carry with them inescapable consequences, only the Christian message gives full recognition to personality as the goal of being, and its message of redemption pivots on the signal display of the divine sacrifice to awaken the mind and heart and will to the nature of the divine love that has been wounded by sin.

The Christian teacher must not give the impression that he waits cap in hand for permission from science as to what he may preach. He believes that an authoritative message from the Heart of Things has come through as to the meaning of life and the world. None the less, it is his business, when in the name of science it is alleged that the great moral truths have ceased to be valid, that sin is a mere obsession, that conscience is herd instinct, and that righteousness is optional, to take the ground of science as far as he may and to display the fact that there is no necessary antagonism between a scientific view of the universe and its divine significance as proclaimed by the Christian message.

It has perhaps required antagonistic theories of the universe to make us realize that the Christian message gives an interpretation of the whole process of creation through the incarnation of the Eternal Spirit in the Man Christ Jesus, imparting the power to become the sons of God.

The earthly life of Jesus is the epitome of man's life. The miraculous birth may signify the direct act of the Divine Spirit in the creation of man. His lowly life and endurance marks our human lot ; His Cross and Resurrection symbolize our mortality and triumph ; His Ascension betokens the victory of God and man. But as Interpreter of God, Jesus lets us into mysteries otherwise unfathomable. Only if Jesus on the cross represents the infinite self-giving of the Creator have

we any satisfying expression of the cost to God of the redemptive plan, not forcing (that is, destroying), but winning, the wills which He had brought into being through the creative process. That God became man in order that men might become divine is a truth sufficient alike for wise and simple.

J. Parton Milum.

Prayer (*all standing*) :

O Lord, hear our prayer, and let our cry come unto Thee ;
Forgive us, we beseech Thee,
Where we have darkened the light that was in us, taken the easy path, chosen our own way and will ; where we have been content with unworthy motives ; where we have wasted ourselves upon the fashion of this world ; where we have loved the praise of men,
Forgive us, we beseech Thee,
Where we have failed in courage, in purity, in sincerity, in unselfishness, in humility, in devotion, in love ; wherein specially we have not loved and served Thee according to the vision of our youthful days,
Hear us as we pray for penitent and obedient hearts.
May Thy Holy Spirit convince us of these sins which we have been unwilling to acknowledge even to ourselves ; and may the self-same Spirit of Grace bring home to us at this hour the assurance of Thy renewed forgiveness and Thine eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Silence.

Hymn : *Tune :* 'Millennium.'

Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears ;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears :
Before the throne my Surety stands ;
My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above,
For me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood, to plead ;
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears
Received on Calvary ;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me :
Forgive him, O forgive ! they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die !

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear Anointed One ;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son :
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father ! cry.

III

SIN—ITS SOCIAL ISSUES

Is there not a social aspect to every sin? The distinctive character of sin, the theologians say, is that it is sin against God. Is it not at the same time, and by its very nature, a wrong done to our fellows? In the very act of rebellion against God, do we not wound the fellowship of His children? Are not all sins against God, wrongs against our fellows: and all wrongs done to our fellows, sins against God?

It seems impossible, upon reflection, to deny this, although it has not always received recognition. The religious sense, mourning its sins against God, has not always been sensitive to the human wrong which gives the tang to its shame: Bishop Andrewes wets his *Private Prayers* with his tears, but shows no sign of compunction for his ignoble part in the case of the shameless Countess of Essex. Equally, the sense of social wrong has sometimes been impervious to the deeper issues that are at stake: Tom Payne is sore for the trampled rights of man, but his blasphemies blur his vision of that grace of God by which alone, in the last resort, human wrong can be righted. The consequences of recognizing that all sin is social in some aspect or other are obvious. If all sins against God are wrongs against our fellows, we can never be right with God till we are right with our fellows. If wrong done to our fellows is sin against God, then mere measures of amelioration are inadequate to atone for it: it needs some deeper medicine of penitence and divine forgiveness before the evil can be repaired. A deeper religious sense should give a sharper edge to our social conscience: an awakened social conscience should open our eyes to our desperate need of religion.

(1) In any case, the sense of sin against God must awaken within the sphere of human relations. A glance at the problem of origins will show this. In the latest attempt to interpret the old theological doctrine of original sin, which has shadowed religion like a nightmare, the roots of sin in human nature are traced to an inherent and inherited weakness in our social instinct. Of the natural and instinctive impulses which we take over from our animal ancestry, the three strongest are : the instinct of self-preservation, the sex instinct, and the social instinct ; and, of these, the social, or herd, instinct is least definite, and the most liable to be thwarted by the others. We may put it in this way : We all like to live together—the human 'swarms,' as H. G. Wells calls them, which mark modern civilization—your sprawling London, your gang-infested Chicago, the motley millions of the triple cities which comprise Hankow—are the product of an impulse as natural as that which makes sheep go in flocks, and cattle in herds. But it is one thing to like living together ; it is another thing to know how. Somehow the human animal has not found it an easy thing to discover the secret. In his social organization, apparently, he is not anything like as successful as those minute creatures, the ants and the bees. The reason may be found in the comparative weakness of the social instinct, as over against the strong and insistent urges derived from the instinct for self-preservation, and the sex instinct. Remember how every social and religious restraint in Alec D'Urberville snapped at the pressure of the animal passion evoked in him by the innocent beauty of Tess. Man is always being tempted to sacrifice the social bond to give play to purely individual and self-regarding impulses. He has liked to herd with his fellows—but of the law of the herd he has only learned by a painful process of trial and error. The early cave man, by all the

photographs of him we see, must have been a fearsome beast !

(2) Leave the problem of origins : turn to the facts of man's moral history. Observe this : that the moral problem has always been to win recognition for the rights of the other man—our impulse has been to claim the right to live ourselves, and to deny it to the other fellow. The earliest morality was tribal, upheld by the twin sanctions of religious taboo and tribal custom. So far we may say it was a recognition of the equal right of the other members of the tribe along with ourselves. But the tribe was the unit, and the individual within it counted for little, except as a member of the tribe. But of other tribes outside your tribe—what ? They had no accorded rights at all. What governed you in your relations with other tribes was the law of the jungle. You fought them—and, if you were the stronger, you killed them ; if they were the stronger, they killed you. That was the law of the jungle. You denied each other the right to live. And if, perchance, you were moved to spare the life of your defeated foe, it was not because you thought he had any sacred claim to life—it was because you thought he might be of use to you—and you took him home to be your slave. That was how the hideous wrong of slavery commenced, which has darkened human story up to our own day : in a denial of the right of the other man to have his own life to live.

Within the tribe, too, it is well to remember there has been an equally intense struggle to win recognition for the sanctity of individual life. In the days of the old *patria potestas*, the absolute right of life and death over wives, children, and slaves, was accorded to the father of the family. Over against him they had no rights at all. On one side of its operation the *patria potestas* was well enough. It was the instrument of tribal justice ; it expressed the tribal unity. But it

easily became an instrument of oppression. In Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law* one may read how the wrongs that were perpetrated by the *patria potestas* stirred the sluggish human conscience to accord rights first to children, then to slaves, and last of all to wives. As Lecky's famous *History of European Morals* shows, humanity has a sorry tale to tell of the persistent wrongs done to children, slaves, and women. Actually, in the sphere of social justice, the last trace of the old *patria potestas* as it affected womanhood did not disappear from English law until the Married Woman's Property Act—giving a wife the right of holding property independently of her husband. The fact is not without its signification for our subject : it is an incident that shows how slow we have been to recognize the sacred worth of personality, the denial of which gives the sting to social wrong. The significance of the struggle for the emancipation of womanhood lies in the fact that so often she was denied the right to a life of her own.

(3) A consideration of actual law points in the same way : that what makes the wrong of sin is a denial of our brother's right to live. Take any ancient code of law, from Hammurabi on, and see if it is not an attempt to claim for the individual a right to live, against the unrestrained operation of natural impulses which denied it. In positive law, the human conscience sought to make laws for the herd. Think, for example, of the Hebrew Ten Commandments. It is the fashion to belittle their worth and significance nowadays. As I read them, they are a first bulwark against wrong : an attempt to impose restraint on untutored impulse, and inspire recognition of the other man's right to live. *Why* mustn't we steal ? *Why* mustn't we kill ? *Why* mustn't we bear false witness ? *Why* mustn't we commit adultery ? Because with every one of those impulsive or instinctive acts your fellow man's life is imperilled.

You steal his food, and he starves to death ; you take his garments, and he dies of cold. You steal his wife's affections, and you wound him in the most sensitive part of his being. You give false evidence against him, and take away his character, and it means his death ! Regard for the other man is life's most sacred obligation ; and disregard of him is sin ! Is not that what the Hebrew prophets, with their keen and sensitive social consciences, are always hammering at ? When men sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and, in their greed, pant after the dust on the heads of the poor ; when they make the ephah small, and the shekel great, to make gain out of another's life—they are sinning against God, because they are injuring the life of their fellow men.

(4) Come to the impact of Jesus Christ upon our social conscience. Observe its intensification of the sense of sin as callousness to our brother's need. The results are almost terrifying. For Jesus Christ has done two significant things to the moral law—both of which intensify the terror of social sin. He has widened the moral law till it becomes universal ; He has deepened and spiritualized it till we know no rest unless our own hearts are right towards all men, as we desire to be towards God. First, He has universalized the moral law. Jewish morality found the recognition of Gentile rights a difficulty. The Deuteronomic Law prohibited the taking of usury from a Hebrew lest you impoverish him, but you could take as much as you cared from a Gentile and it didn't matter. The cynic, remembering Shylock, might say that they seem to have taken full advantage of that permissive clause. But Jesus said, ' Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you.' What could that mean to a Jew but that he must think of the Roman, the Greek, and the Gentile, and all the accursed host of the uncircumcised, as of himself ? Are you surprised that official Judaism repudiated the

universalism of Jesus ? Second : ' *Love* your enemies ! ' as all the commentators insist almost *ad nauseam*—a positive, not a negative command. Not merely abstain from hurting him : seek his good as you seek your own ! You remember how the redeemed Jewish rabbi leapt up to the wonder of it. ' Owe no man anything, save to love one another. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, nor covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Love therefore, is the fulfilment of the law.'

Now see how that intensifies the concept of sin as social wrong ; sin becomes a failure in the love of our fellow men ! Remember, too, that it is a failure in Christian love, and, as some one reminds us, Christian love is redemptive. When Paul sought a motive for Christian action, he found it here : ' Despise not him for whom Christ died.' In the Fourth Gospel, that new commandment of Christian love is expressed in terms which make us bate our breath. ' A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you '—unto death !

And anything short of that for the Christian is sin ! The Christian ethic not only forbids the perpetration of social wrong ; it puts upon us the positive obligation to be redemptive in our love and our service. One startling character of the morality exhibited in the gospel is that the severest condemnations of our Lord are not upon the things we do, but upon the things we do not do, because of our blindness to need, and callousness to wrong. It is Dives, clad in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, but not seeing the beggar at his door, who is plagued with eternal thirst, being in torments. Jewish priest and Levite, who, seeing a man left half dead by thieves, could pass by

on the other side, must surrender their moral crown to the Samaritan, who had compassion on him. The judgement on the nations summoned before the eternal judgement seat is for their failure in common humanity. 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it not to Me.'

(5) We are now in sight of the divine sanction, the disregard of which for the Christian, then, turns the perpetration of social wrong against our brother into sin against God. That sanction is the redeeming love of God in Christ. We wrong our brother every time we treat him less than God treats him; and God gave His Son to redeem him. It is a significant fact that every historical awakening to the wonder of the redeeming love of God has brought a new concern for men. The first consequence of Christianity, says Lecky, was a new sense of the sanctity of human life, and the second was a new sense of universal brotherhood. These new impulses gave birth to a new spirit of solicitude for children and slaves, and sexual purity and benevolence became the hallmarks of the highest character! Dean Inge has recently reminded us of the early Christian saying: 'When thou seest thy brother, thou seest thy Lord.' It was the motive spring of a new humanity. Ever since, whenever men have sighted afresh the wonder of the Cross, the vision has broken out in a new love of men. A biographer says of Francis of Assisi, 'His dress was mean, his person insignificant, his face without beauty, but with so much power did God inspire his words that many noble families, sundered by ancient blood feuds, were reconciled for ever'! And not least among the glories of the Evangelical Revival was that it created a new passion for humanity which set slaves free, rescued women from mine labour and little children from premature toil, and inspired the sons of industry with visions of a new world! Dean Inge, whose opinions are

usually unlike other people's, says that Christianity had very little to do with this newly-awakened humanitarian sense. He shall be answered by Benjamin Kidd: 'The two doctrines which contributed most to producing the extinction of slavery were, the doctrines of salvation and the doctrine of the equality of all men before the Deity. . . . The doctrine of salvation in particular, proved at an early stage to be one of the most powerful solvents ever applied to the minds of men. The immense and incalculable importance that the welfare of even the meanest creature acquired for his soul's sake possessed an unusual significance. It tended from the beginning to weaken degrading class distinction, and it immediately raised even the slave to a position of native dignity.'

All this means, from our standpoint, that social wrongs were being recognized as sins. 'I am not easy to do it,' said John Woolman in an epoch-making word, when asked to make out a bill of sale for a negro slave. There are some things we ought to be uneasy about! I am not sure we have reaped all the moral fruit in social regeneration that the Evangelical Revival ought to have given us. Let Bishop Gore analyse our 'present discontents' in those two sombre propositions which preface his Halley Stewart Lectures on *Christ and Society*. The first proposition is: 'That the present condition of our society, our industrial and our international relations, though it presents encouraging features, yet, on the whole, must inspire in our minds a deep sense of dissatisfaction and alarm, and a demand for so thorough a reformation as to amount to a revolution, though one which the teaching of experience, no less than the teaching of Christ, leads us to believe can only be brought about by gradual and peaceful means.' The second is: 'That the evils which we deplore in our present society are not the inevitable results of any unalterable laws of nature,

or any kind of inexorable necessity, but are the fruits of human blindness, wilfulness, avarice, and selfishness on the widest scale and in the long course of history ; and that therefore their alteration demands something more than legislative and external changes, necessary as these may be : it demands a fundamental change of the spirit in which we think about and live our common life and conduct our industry, and maintain our international relations.' Ultimately, then, our responsibility for the social order is a moral and spiritual question. We may not be responsible for ' the ape and tiger,' in us, but we are responsible for controlling their fierce impulsive energies, and directing them to the service of the whole brotherhood. In an age of increasing mechanization, with the shadow of secularism creeping over all the earth, we shall have to fight hard for the worth and dignity of the human labourer. Shall we ever do right by him till we see him, not as a labourer working for wages, to be dismissed, when done with, with a curt nod, but as a workman of God, serving the brotherhood? In an age of increasing sexual laxity, when cheap talk about marriage and love is bandied on every lip, we shall have to seek a divine significance in the meaning of sex, by which men become chivalrous knights of Christian love, who see in every woman a pure daughter of God, and not a vessel of shame. We must somehow counter the corrupt selfish indulgence which can spend £300,000,000 in drink, and squander £200,000,000 in betting and gambling, every year, at a time when trade is bad, unemployment pressing, and people clamouring for homes to live in. In an age of international contacts, we must strive to replace the law of the jungle by the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven ! Anything less will be sin against God.

To end : all sin is sin against God, say the theologians. They also say : therefore only God can save us from sin. Is that true of social wrong conceived as sin

against God? How else? I began with the hypothesis that the emergence of sin in human life is due to an inherited weakness derived from an animal ancestry in our social instinct. I only know one power in all the world adequate to reinforcing the weak social instinct which is the pitfall of our frail humanity, and creating a divine society in which love to all the brotherhood abounds. It is the power of the love of God. I care not from which side you begin. Begin with the idea of sin against God, and you must think of the brother, God's child, whom you wrong. Begin with the wrong you do your brother, and you must end with the affront you've done to the God, who is the Father of us all. Set out to redeem your brother: you will soon become aware of a desperate need of God's grace. Devote yourself to God's service: you will find it in love of the brotherhood. 'I loved the people,' said Henry George to Cardinal Manning, 'and that led me to Christ as the people's best friend.' 'And I loved Christ,' said Cardinal Manning, 'and that led me to the people for whom Christ died.'

E. C. Urwin.

Jesus said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

Let us Examine our Life in the Light of this Condition of Christian Discipleship :

If our blessedness has been in our seclusion and protection from the squalor and tragedy of life,

If we have consented to the self-assertion and self-aggression of men, or classes, or nations,

If we have thought little of the unrighteous dealings which have deprived men of their just share in the material blessings of life,

Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

If our hearts and judgements have been hardened against the weak, the incompetent, the unemployed, and the unemployable, the bankrupt and the outcast,

If cynicism or prejudice, differences of temperament or class, have excused our alienation in spirit and sympathy from our fellows,

If we have upheld the claims of ourselves, of our cause, of individuals, sexes, classes, churches, nations in a spirit that has hindered reconciliation,

Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

If we have accepted worldly standards of honour, truth, duty, and have coveted most the approval of men,

If we have been content to fulfil our formal duties, if our service has been stunted and uninspiring because of complacent acceptance of material ideals of success and failure,

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and create within us the mind which was in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn : *Tune :* 'Worsley.'

I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this alone,
To spend, and to be spent, for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known ;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe, to breathe Thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into Thy blessèd hands receive ;
And let me live to preach Thy word,
And let me to Thy glory live ;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the sinner's Friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine !
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like Thine ;
And lead them to Thy open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

Benediction :

Now unto Him Who is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish, in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

V

THE WORK OF GRACE

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The doctrines of grace are central and vital to evangelical religion. If their wealth of significance and their inspiring authority have suffered eclipse in the Message of Methodism it may be because grace is too often thought of and expressed in impersonal terms. It is easy to cherish a traditional, but unconfessed, sympathy with the view that the operation of divine grace in redemptive processes is 'omnipotence directed by omniscience,' working irresistibly upon human nature. That is a view inconsistent with any fair interpretation of evangelical religion as based upon personal values and realized in personal relations. Grace is essentially a personal relation. Being such, it cannot be an arbitrary activity on the part of God. When we declare that what God's grace succours is a moral person sorely in need through inherent weaknesses and beset by evil environment, we make ready the way for the return of the doctrines of grace to their experimental authority in evangelical religion.

There are people honestly perplexed who will reply to the foregoing assertions that the fundamental question is not how does God fulfil His work of grace in evangelical experience of redemption, but does God really work at all therein. The reality of forgiveness of sins by God Himself is challenged. Forgiveness is said to be purely subjective.

Now, if it could be shown that our spiritual experiences involve no objective Godward reality it is obvious that the basis of evangelical faith would be jeopardized and our Methodist Message lose its authentic note. There is need, therefore, to set forth the objective reality of forgiveness ; that there truly is a God who surely and freely forgives ; that this forgiveness is verified in changed personal relations, and that these are our most reliable values in judging of Reality.

Even more positive is the challenge directed against the distinctive note of the Methodist Message—the doctrine of assurance. It is important to defend its validity against the assertion that it is simply a form of auto-suggestion. It is also desirable that experience of the witness of the Spirit should be presented in the light of much valuable insight resulting from balanced and illuminating psychological analyses. It may be wholesome also to ask ourselves quite soberly, When have we the right to take to ourselves the comfortable assurance of personal salvation, and can we securely profess this assurance without becoming Pharisees ? There is also a growing compulsion to show that assurance of reconciliation with God involves, and indeed includes, an assurance of reconciliation with the world order as the sphere of His unerring providential government, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and this to the degree, not only of depending upon the final order of the world as triumphantly moral, but so that our confidence in God embraces the ills of common life, its struggles and sufferings as well as its blessings, as being integral parts of God's perfected ministry of grace.

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Houghton.'

O what shall I do my Saviour to praise,
So faithful and true, so plenteous in grace,
So strong to deliver, so good to redeem
The weakest believer that hangs upon Him!

How happy the man whose heart is set free,
The people that can be joyful in Thee!
Their joy is to walk in the light of Thy face,
And still they are talking of Jesus's grace.

Their daily delight shall be in Thy name;
They shall as their right Thy righteousness claim;
Thy righteousness wearing, and cleansed by Thy blood,
Bold shall they appear in the presence of God.

For Thou art their boast, their glory and power;
And I also trust to see the glad hour,
My soul's new creation, a life from the dead,
The day of salvation, that lifts up my head.

For Jesus, my Lord, is now my defence;
I trust in His word, none plucks me from thence;
Since I have found favour, He all things will do;
My King and my Saviour shall make me anew.

Yes, Lord, I shall see the bliss of Thine own,
Thy secret to me shall soon be made known;
For sorrow and sadness I joy shall receive,
And share in the gladness of all that believe.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

Forgiveness	Luke vii. 36–50
Reconciliation	Rom. v. 8–11

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Rockingham.'

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

I

GRACE—THE SUCCOUR OF PERSONALITY

Dr. Scott Lidgett has written, 'The grace of God is a distinctive conception of the Christian religion, and the most distinctive, for not only does it distinguish Christianity from all other religions, but it is paramount throughout the whole realm of Christian thought and life. Indeed, for Christians God is above all the God of grace. Grace represents His highest gift, and man's sorest need. In grace the full glory of the divine character is revealed.'

Grace may be defined as love in God regarded as free, spontaneous, and undeserved.

When God took the initiative in reconciling men to Himself, and for this purpose sent His Son into the world, the motive from which He acted, and which in Christ He consistently carried out, was grace,—free, undeserved love to men. God came into humanity in Christ in order to accomplish the will of grace. This motive dominated the whole work of Christ, not only in its end, but in its course and means. Without contradiction, or inconsistency anywhere, the work of Christ was a work of grace. It was work of grace and not work of law. In no sense was it a legal transaction, intended to influence law relations between God and man. In all its parts and aspects, the work of Christ for men consistently follows the method of free grace. This is the doctrine of the New Testament. It represents that God, fronting man as sinful, conceived an eternal purpose—the eternal purpose which Paul says He purposed in Jesus Christ, to bring them to Himself; that love went out from Him to them, and that He loved them while they were yet sinners and enemies. 'For when we were enemies we were reconciled to God

by the death of His Son.' Dr. William Clarke has a fine passage in his *Theology* in which he says, 'The motive of free grace to the undeserving was God's motive in sending Christ into the world, and to this motive every part of His work corresponds. This gospel was not veiled legalism. It did not come to satisfy legal demands, or win law-righteousness. Neither with God who gave it, nor man who received it, nor yet with Christ through whom it came, is the Christian salvation a salvation by law. It is not imparted on terms of law, is not procured by works or earned by merit. We are not saved by payment of a debt, nor by legal satisfaction, or transfer of merit. God does not deal with men through Christ in the character of lawgiver, judge, or in any special relation, but in His real character as God, His own very self, in personal relations with His creatures; and the method of His saving work is that of grace, which does not wait for any one's merit or earning, but freely gives.'

Grace expresses itself in two ways:

It takes the form of divine favour. Paul writes, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' In this passage God's favour is shown in the gift of His Son, His reconciliation with man, and the remission of sins that are past.

This favour finds its focus and effect in forgiveness. In forgiveness the fullness of God's grace is reached. It is God's greatest act for man, and man's most ineffable experience of God. To be forgiven is the wealthiest benefit that ever comes to man. It is the priceless fruit of Christ's atonement. That man might

be forgiven was the end and meaning of all He suffered. But what do we mean by forgiveness? Let us clear the word of all the accretions that obscure its grace. It has no immediate connexion with retribution or penalty. We must separate it from any idea of escape or of compensation. Averting punishment and gaining heaven may be the fruits of forgiveness, but they are not its primary act or essence.

Forgiveness implies a personal relation, reciprocity between individuals. It is essentially the interaction of personalities, as when two persons, the one having wronged the other, unite in a sincere friendship. When Absalom rebelled against his father, by the intercession of Joab he was permitted to return to the capital, but David said, 'Let him turn to his own house and let him not see my face.' And it is recorded, 'Absalom returned to his own house, but saw not the king's face.' Here is the remission of a penalty, but not forgiveness. In the parable of the Prodigal Son we have a perfect example of what forgiveness means. It is not seen in the gifts of the robe, ring, and feast—these were but the flowers growing from it—but in the father falling on the prodigal's neck and kissing him. In that reconciliation, more than in his gifts, was the grace of the Father seen. Paul has written for our instruction in the divine benignity, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,' and from this amazing word he advances to another: 'and God hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' It follows that the supreme appeal of our evangelism is, 'Be ye reconciled to God,' and the supreme privilege of man is to be thus reconciled.

Grace expresses itself also in a divine activity. There is a doctrine of divine indwelling that we cannot neglect without impoverishing our privileges and experience. In 1 John iv. 12 we read: 'Whoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in

God.' In Ephesians iii. 17: 'Christ dwelleth in your hearts by faith,' and in Rom. v. 5: 'The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to you'—God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, dwelling with men as active forces, sanctifying and empowering them. We cannot in experience distinguish the individual operations of the persons of the Trinity. No one can say in any experience that he is influenced by one and not by the others. Perhaps this is just our human way of expressing an experience that carries with it the sense of divine influence, and because of the peculiarity of this experience we think of it as the action of one person. But the sum of this teaching in the New Testament of a divine indwelling suggests to us that there is an intimacy of fellowship, and possession of men by God, that gives to them the sense of God's inwardness and inspiration.

This divine energy within us we know to be creative, giving fullness to life, making us anew in Christ Jesus, and raising us to another order of being called Sons of God. It is also a re-enforcing and enabling power by which we overcome and by which we become. It imparts the inward assurance of our sonship. But what gives it distinction is that it is not the pressure of God from without, a God residing at some remote centre of things, but a God whose pressure acts upon us from within 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.' This is the full manifestation of His grace, that He is not external to any one of us, but makes each devout and obedient soul the dwelling-place of His presence. God is reincarnated in every believer. This is a truth of mystery, and we try to interpret it by our human analogies, but the fact outshining all our theories is that God is an inward reality to those who love Him.

In all this wonderful contact of God and man, God is always the giver. The initiative is with Him. It is this divine initiation that manifests the grace of

God's purpose for us. Historically, the first approach was not the movement of man and his need seeking God, but the movement of God's love seeking men. 'While we were yet sinners Christ died, the just for the unjust.' 'Therein is love, not that we loved Him but that He loved us.' The divine purpose of redemption is coeval with God's purpose to create. Christ was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' Redemption was no afterthought, consequent on man's sinning, but an eternal purpose born of the character and nature of God.

Our subject requires us to consider the bearing of this grace on the personality of man.

God's appeal is to the whole personality of man. He deals immediately with personality, not with individualized instincts or mental functions. There is no separate religious instinct or faculty in man. Some thinkers have found in these the origin of religion, or the exclusive mediums of God's communications. They say that in all religious acts man functions through a particular susceptibility of his being. God's appeal is always to the whole man, and in every religious act the whole personality is engaged. 'We call upon all that is within us.' In worship there is thought, feeling, self-determination, and in no religious act can one of these be eliminated. The psalmist said, 'My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God,' body and spirit, heart and flesh. The whole rounded soul of the psalmist entered into that cry, and his soul was unified in that cry. Worship is the topmost altitude of man's attainment, and in it every mental function is active. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' We cannot divide ourselves before God. He demands the surrendered whole.

Human personality is inspired and unfolded in the word given for man's salvation and perfection. This

word was given by revelation. We know the truth about God, being, destiny, because God by act of grace has revealed it to us in His Word. There man has learnt how to live and conduct himself fittingly in a world like this. This revelation, given by God, was received and written by man. 'God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.' God is no longer hidden from us, the dark background of our unopened minds, or imperfectly revealed, imperfect in measure or method. He is not found by searching, but by believing. It is faith that gives us our God. God is not the creation of man's mind, but revealed by His own will. It is a progressive revelation. We see the truth of this as we compare man's knowledge of God as disclosed in the Pentateuch, or later in the Old Testament, and the knowledge of God as disclosed in John's Gospel. Between these periods of revelation were centuries of human striving and divine leading, centuries of the growing capacity of man for the truth and the enlarging revelation. God is straitened in us. You take your child for a walk ; the child determines the pace ; and God's will has been limited, not only by the incapacity of man, but by his perversity. He has refused the truth, obscured it, mixed it with error, subordinated it to his prepossessions, burnt it and drenched it with blood, but the truth has won its widening way from patriarch to prophet, and from prophet to apostle. God has not ceased in His revealing grace. As man makes himself capable of new discoveries, the light comes, and the vision is seen. We need the conviction that revelation is increasing upon us to-day. The new knowledge from theology, science, history, anthropology, and all the quickened pursuits of the human mind, have given us a truer knowledge of God. As against the last century, and indeed all

previous centuries, we are worshipping to-day a glorified God. We could not hark back to the God of Augustine or Luther. We are not only the heirs of the ages, but the leaders. God's revelation will never lag behind the capacity of man. As revelation did not cease with the first century, neither is the twentieth century a terminus. In the light and inspiration of this revelation man's personality unfolds. God gives always and in all things, up to the measure of man's willingness to receive. Every new truth received by an individual educates the mind, and makes it capable of a higher truth, and so revelation is God's way of enlarging and purifying personality and bringing it to the fullness of its own life.

There is a simultaneous impact of God's grace on personality. In every soul there is a divine urge. We speak of the psychic centres and motor energies of personality. Thought is unified in conviction, and will outworks itself in decisions, but the centralizing energy of man is love. Whoever would unify himself and properly motive himself must love actively. God mediates His very self to man in love. It is His inclusive demand upon him. 'Thou shalt love' is God's law for religion and morality. God not only enlightens the mind by revelation, but fulfils and unifies personality in love. 'We love because He first loved us.' Here in strict distinction are two facts brought into vital relation. 'We love' over against 'He loves,' but the scarlet word in this verse is that word 'first.' Here is affirmed the divine initiative, the love of God the inspiration and life of all love. 'Not that we loved Him, but that He loved us.' Love is the energy of God in man, the forward thrust of His will. To this urge great responses are being made to-day. We have living examples of God's love acting initially on men, in social reform, the Union of the Churches, and the League of Nations. These results have only come

instrumentally through ecclesiastics, reformers, and politicians. Behind them have been nineteen centuries of Christian teaching and ministry, preaching the gospel, the moral ideals of the New Testament, and the Christian doctrine of man ; and these have made men willing to and capable of these reforms. It is the conviction that these movements were initiated by the will and activity of God that gives us confidence in their righteousness and stability. Those who are promoting these advances of grace may not discern it within themselves, yet unconsciously they are responding to an urge of God, the end of which is man made complete in Jesus Christ.

Personality finds its full development in two institutions, worship and service.

Man's capacity for fellowship with God is his supreme endowment. That he can interpret His speech, respond to His love, and will His will lifts him into the realm of sonship. It is in this atmosphere his personality grows, for, released from the tyranny of the earthly and the fleshly, it accords with the life of God. The constancy of this fellowship is our great privilege. It is not a fellowship of selected hours and places, which create the fitting mood, but a daily fellowship amidst the work, conflicts, and fret of life, teaching us that, whether we eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God ; not a communion of occasions, but an unbroken and life-long friendship. It is an intimacy of the street, market-place, and pleasure-ground as of the House of God and the sanctuaries of nature.

It is high favour to man that God has chosen him to be a co-worker with Himself, in His redemptive purpose. Man is not only the beneficiary of God's grace, but the agent. He has called and commissioned His Church to preach His gospel and evangelize the world, and He is trusting to the fidelity of His Church for the accomplishment of His saving purpose. One of

the marvels of history is the progress of the Church through imperfect men. When we remember the moral character of the Church in certain ages, and know the defects and faults of ourselves, it fills us with amazement that Christianity survived. God, like Christ, knew the men He called, and He graciously and patiently bore with them, and bears with us to-day. Withal the Church is purifying itself; more than in other periods, is seeking a fuller devotion and efficiency; and in the service of the Church men are realizing a higher type of character. But this is grace upon grace that God not only reveals Himself to us, forgives us for the sins that are past, once again creates us in His own image, imparts His living presence to us, and unites us to Himself, but He makes us the partners of His will to redeem all men and establish His Kingdom upon earth. In this work the soul of His Church is being saved, unfolded, perfected.

JAMES LOCKHART.

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Sagiora ' (Sagina)

And can it be, that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood ?
Died He for me, who caused His pain ?
For me, who Him to death pursued ?
Amazing love ! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me ?

'Tis mystery all ! The Immortal dies !
Who can explore His strange design ?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine !
'Tis mercy all ! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace !
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race :
'Tis mercy all, immense and free ;
For, O my God, it found out me !

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night ;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light ;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread ;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine !
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING :

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Fountain of all goodness, God of all grace, we bless Thee that Thy visitation preserveth our spirits and that Thy loving kindness is ever the hiding-place of our souls.

Let all that is within me bless Thy Holy Name.

That Thou hast remembered us when we have forgotten Thee, followed us when we have fled from Thee, tarried for us with unwearied patience, met us with forgiveness when we have turned back to Thee—for all Thy long-suffering and the patience of Thy pitifulness,

Let all that is within me bless Thy Holy Name.

That Thy persuasions have led us to desire the things that Thou dost desire for us, to aspire towards the things that belong to our peace, and to strive to attain the high calling whereunto Thou didst appoint us in Thy beloved Son before the foundation of the world,

Let all that is within me bless Thy Holy Name.

II

THE REALITY OF FORGIVENESS

The subject allocated to me is the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin. This topic inevitably centres round the Atoning Work of Christ. In this paper I shall attempt to examine in brief the following points :

A. Does the new conception of the physical universe, as taught by astronomers and physicists to-day, support the mechanistic view of life which rules out the possibility of rational choice ?

B. Do recent psychological investigations substantiate determinism in the realm of the spirit ? For, if this is so, clearly forgiveness is impossible.

C. What are the valid philosophical presuppositions of the doctrine of forgiveness ?

D. How are we to consider the social problem allied to the experience of forgiveness ?

E. What is the conception of the death of Christ in the Gospels ?

F. How has the doctrine developed in the Christian Church ?

A. From the time of Democritus (480 B.C.) to the time of John Dalton (A.D. 1870) the universe was considered to be composed of an infinite number of atoms—that is to say, entities that could not be cut and which were actually solid.

During the last thirty years a revolution in the whole conception of physical reality has taken place. It was thought by many nineteenth-century physicists, especially by Haeckel, that the physical universe was complete in itself, and that mind was simply an offshoot or by-product of material processes mechanically determined. T. H. Huxley shared this view.

The investigations of Böhr, the great Copenhagen physicist, have made it clear that the atom is no longer to be regarded as a solid thing, nor to be regarded as a 'particle,' as Sir Isaac Newton conceived it. It is to be considered as being a centre of electric force. Within the atom, electrons jump from one orbit to another without any assignable cause. This 'jumpiness' of the electrons within the atom suggests an indeterminism at the heart of physical reality. This opinion, that the atom is not subject to strict mechanical principles, where a known effect follows a known cause, is supported by the further investigations of Sir A. S. Eddington and Sir Ernest Rutherford, who both make it perfectly clear that there are processes going on within the atom, which, as far as we know, are not determined by antecedent causes.

A. S. Eddington writes: 'It is a consequence of the advent of the quantum theory that physics is no longer pledged to a scheme of deterministic law. Those who maintain a deterministic theory of mental activity must do so as the outcome of a study of the mind itself, and not with the idea that they are thereby making it more conformable with our experimental knowledge of the laws of inorganic nature.' Again he writes: 'If we re-introduce determinism as the basis of the world structure, it is because our philosophy predisposes us that way, not because we know of any experimental evidence in its favour.'[1]

Sir J. J. Thompson says: 'Not very long ago the atom was thought to be a terminus beyond which it is impossible, from the nature of things, to penetrate. The atom was regarded as indestructible, impenetrable, eternal, unaffected by heat, electricity, or any other principal agent. The inside of the atom was regarded as a territory which the physicists could never enter.'

We now know, if the modern physicists are right, that

[1] *The Nature of the Physical Universe*, A. S. Eddington, pp. 303 f.

all this was wrong. The sanctuary of the atom has had its doors broken open, and the infinitely little is quite as complex as the infinitely great. I do not suggest that we ought to base an argument for free will on the indeterminism that characterizes the internal structure of the atom. That would be, as Aristotle says, a transference of logic from one sphere to another. But I do suggest that if we live in a universe such as modern physics describes, where determinism cannot be universally applied, there is inevitably more room for the free, spontaneous, purposive activity of a Divine Being in His relations to His children, and consequently forgiveness is more of a possibility.

Modern biology warrants the same conclusion in regard to indeterminism as characteristic of life processes. Certain things within all living organisms are probably explicable in mechanical terms. Reflex action, for instance, in its varied manifestations, appears to be a purely mechanical phenomenon. Our hereditary characteristics are inherent in the germ cells from which all new life comes. The hereditary ' factors,' or ' genes,' as they are called, are the units in the germ plasm, and control the appearance and certain definite characteristics in the offspring.

It is considered by biologists since the days of Lamarck and Darwin that certain little rod-shaped bodies, called chromosomes, in the germ cell are the carriers of the hereditary ' factors,' or ' genes.' Professor Julian Huxley, in one of his essays, tells us that ' chromosomes ' play a vital part in our lives, and that they are the physical basis of inheritance. ' They are elongated bodies, and along their length is stretched the stuff of heredity.' If it is true that these ' genes ' determine our disposition, evidently there are some elements in personality that are determined, but it does not follow that all are, and no eminent biologist maintains that we are completely determined.

Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, in his volume *The New Physiology*, makes it explicit that mechanism does not completely account for biological processes, though he rejects the ' entelechies ' of Hans Driesch. In this opinion he is confirmed by H. Bergson, who, in his *Creative Evolution*, suggests that mechanism cannot adequately account for biological phenomena, although Bergson rejects final causes or teleology. There are certain features about life that can best be interpreted, in Aristotle's phraseology, in terms of final causes. Purpose and indeterminism are characteristics of living organisms, so that, from the standpoint of biology too, as well as modern physics, there is room for that type of activity known as purposive which is not explicable in terms of mechanism.

I only go over these points concerning physics and biology to indicate that the mechanistic and materialistic view of life held by some nineteenth-century thinkers is out of date ; because, if it were true that all our physical activities were determined by known laws and causes, there would be no room at all for spontaneous activity, and forgiveness of sins would be unthinkable, for there can only be sin where freedom and personal responsibility exist.

B. Now we shall consider briefly the attitude of modern psychology on the existence of the God who forgives, and the human individual who craves forgiveness.

I shall only discuss in this paper the attitude of the psycho-analyst, who follows the teaching of Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung.

Freud explicity asserts, ' God is a myth ' ; and Jung agrees by saying, ' God is an irrelevance.' The unconscious is described by Freud as meaning that dark region of the personality wherein lie buried those elements of experience which have been repressed or

kept out of consciousness either because they are painful to us, or because they are regarded as illegitimate.

The unconscious is a kind of underground prisoner occasionally breaking in upon our daylight respectability ' with dark groans and maledictions and strange atavistic lusts.'[1] Not in ' trailing clouds of glory ' do we come if this is true. We are saved from an immoral debacle by the fact that Freud creates for us a policeman to keep them under control. The unconcious, for the psycho-analyst, is by far the most important part of personality, and, says Freud, 'may be compared to a large ante-room in which the various mental excitations are crowded upon one another like individual beings. Adjoining this is a second small apartment, a sort of reception-room, in which, too, consciousness resides. But on the threshold between the two there stands a personage in the office of doorkeeper, who examines the various mental excitations, censors them, and denies them admittance to the reception-room when he disapproves of them.'[2]

The unconscious, therefore, is not a storehouse, but a workshop, a hive of activity, and every wish is ultimately sexual, in the broadest sense of the term in which Freud uses it. It is, however, with regard to this determinism of the unconscious part of our nature, as taught by Freud, that we wish to make a hearty protest.

The psycho-analysts have under-estimated the value of conscious life, with its directive and decisive power. They have over-stated the case for the sex-instinct. Self-preservation is probably the strongest instinct. The unconscious may be the driving force, with its instincts and impulses, but *it is not the directing element in personality*, and will, or conation, seems to be most characteristic of conscious life. Moreover, the whole

[1] *Analysis of Mind*, Bertrand Russell, p. 8.
[2] *Lecture on Psycho-Analysis*, Sigmund Freud, p. 228.

conception of the 'censor' is pure speculation. In any case, one cannot conceive for a moment, without very distinct proof, that all our activity is determined by the unconscious, with its race memories, sexual propensities, subjective phantasies, and what not. It is very curious that, when the study of physics is leading us to a distinct indeterministic view of life, the psychoanalysts dealing with the life of the spirit, or consciousness, are endeavouring to foist upon us a deterministic scheme. If this were true, of course forgiveness is impossible, because man would not wish to be better than his past, nor could he help being controlled by it.

In regard to the existence of God, the psychoanalysts have made it clear that they do not believe in an objective Deity. The 'God-myth' is nothing but the repressed wishes of the race finding compensation in symbolic form, and God, for Jung, is but 'a function of the unconscious; the divine effect springs from our own inner self.'[1]

If it could be maintained that God is a projection of the mind of man, we are confronted with a problem that is vital for religion. Is man communing in religion with a projection of his unconscious impulses, or is he really holding communion with a Divine Being other than himself? If the former is true, to ask for forgiveness means we ask forgiveness from ourselves, which might be rather a convenient thing to do, but unfortunately it does not work. Psychology goes beyond its province if it claims to teach us about the essential nature of the Deity. It may throw light on the psychical machinery whereby the soul's experiences have developed, but from the standpoint of theology the idea of God remains unaffected. Clearly, if the power of rational choice be denied, whether in the name of instinct or consciousness, sin is a chimera. If the moral law and religious experience are denuded of all

[1] *Psychological Types*, C. G. Jung, p. 444.

objective validity, and reduced to the level of social utility, conscience is no more than an occasional response to circumstance promoted by herd instinct, and religion is but a soothing illusion.

If, finally, God is a projection of the human mind, and the affirmation of His reality a mere device by which man brings himself some soothing comfort, or if, as Tansley puts it, ' the human mind, like an Indian juggler, can climb up a rope the end of which it has thrown up to the heavens,' we may as well give up all thinking, moral effort, and religion as a supreme farce.

Unwittingly, psycho-analysis has gone beyond its territory because it has not rested content with describing the process of the formation of ' father-complex.' But it has, unfortunately, tried to decipher its *meaning*, which is not its business.

We may conclude this section on the effect of psychology on the doctrine of forgiveness of sins by saying that neither the existence of God as an objective Being who is capable of forgiving sins has been disproved, nor is sufficient attention being given by the psycho-analysts to the possibility of the rational choice of self-conscious life.

C. There are certain philosophical presuppositions necessary for a true doctrine of forgiveness. Christian theism, and the existence of finite spirits, are the two postulates of the doctrine of forgiveness. Clearly, unless there is a Divine Being who is able to exercise forgiving grace, and human spirits who need the acceptance of that grace to bring a sense of unity and unbroken fellowship with God, forgiveness would be an illusion. God must be at least personal if He is to forgive. He must be the Transcendent, Infinite Personality, dominant over every activity that takes place within His universe, in supreme command and absolute control over all the processes of Reality.

In a pantheistic philosophy there can be no forgiveness, for where God is equated with the sum total of things, including finite spirits, there is no clear distinction between God and man, and consequently no need of reconciliation.

A pluralistic universe is a necessary postulate of a doctrine of forgiveness. By a pluralistic universe I do not mean one in which there are 'gods many and lords many,' but rather one in which there is a Supreme Personality, the Creator and Father of all other conscious spirits, with whom He is akin. These finite spirits, while not having absolute freedom in a pluralistic scheme, have freedom of choice. Alternatives of conduct are presented to them, some of which they know to be evil and contrary to the Will of the Supreme Personality, or God. If sin is not possible, it obviously cannot be actual, and not until it is actual is the craving for forgiveness made explicit in human nature.

Neither is forgiveness of sins compatible, strictly speaking, with the notion of a finite Deity such as is advocated by W. James and H. G. Wells. No doubt this idea of a finite Deity in W. James's teaching was part of his reaction from the rigid monism of Hegel, where the absolute is equated with God, and where the finite is 'a moment in the divine Life.' To say, as Hegel does, 'Without the world God is not God,'[1] is to make God dependent on the world, not only for His activity, but for His existence. This position of Absolute Idealism as taught by Hegel cuts at the roots of the Christian doctrine in forgiveness, because it does not clearly differentiate between God and man, and makes sin actually a part of the divine life, if it exists at all.

The tendency of this type of Idealism has been to minimize sin to such an extent as to make it appear unnecessary for repentance. Hegel explicitly says, 'We must rid

[1] *History of Philosophy*, vol. iii., p. 1.

ourselves completely of this opposition of Finite and Infinite.' If the opposition is annihilated, the two become one, and if the two become one, there is no forgiveness necessary. I know that at times Hegel suggests a distinction between God and finite spirits, but the distinction is an appearance and not a reality. Also, when he says, ' God is necessary to the world and the world is necessary to God,' there is a dangerous inclination in this statement to the identification of the two. Christian teaching, on the other hand, asserts that God is not the world, nor is the world necessary to Him, but it affirms that God is independent of His creation, although His creation can never be independent of Him.

My point, however, is, that unless there is an Infinitely Personal Being, whose Will to good is guaranteed absolute victory over all forms of evil, there will be no certainty that forgiveness by the Divine Being, if He were only finite, would carry with it the moral dynamic to ensure moral victory in the breast of the forgiven. Moreover, if there is doubt about the final victory of God, which is inevitable if He is finite, and we are not sure that the age-long battle between good and evil will end in the triumph of the good, what satisfaction is there in being forgiven at all? It is the nature of the God who forgives that determines the quality and the satisfactoriness of the forgiven experience in the finite mind. This God must be Infinite, Absolute, and Personal.

The Christian faith affirms the victory of God is assured because of His nature, and consequently it is worth while experiencing forgiveness of sins and sharing His victory. It is clear that a materialistic philosophy or a pantheistic philosophy, a materialistic monism or a spiritualistic monism, would be incapable of providing a rationale for a doctrine of forgiveness. I am aware of the difficulties of theism, but I venture the assertion

that the difficulties of Absolute Idealism are both more numerous and more problematic.[1] The philosophic basis of forgiveness is theism, or belief in an Infinite Personal Deity.

It is interesting to note that the theistic idealism of the type advocated by Bishop Berkeley, as distinct from the idealism taught by Hegel, seems to be a philosophy of the universe which is receiving some confirmation to-day; although the subject is approached by a very different road by modern physics. Bishop Berkeley sums up his philosophy in the startling words, 'All the choir of heaven and furniture of earth; in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world have not any substance without the mind. So long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind, or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the minds of some Eternal Spirit.'

Sir James Jeans, in his capable little work *The Mysterious Universe*, says, 'Modern science seems to me to lead by a very different road to a not altogether dissimilar conclusion. It does not matter whether objects exist in my mind or that of any other created spirit or not; their objectivity arises from their subsisting "in the mind of some Eternal Spirit."' A theistic idealism, then, we conclude is the philosophic basis of a valid doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.

D. The human side of the problem of forgiveness is difficult. We do not know all that forgiveness means to God; but we know this much—God does freely and fully forgive all who repent sincerely and believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Baron von Hügel talks of the 'costingness of forgiveness to God.' It cost Him so much that we simply

[1] See my *Ourselves and Reality* (Epworth Press).

cannot search the depth of God's forgiving grace. But the human side presents certain practical difficulties. A man may know that God forgives his sin, but he may feel dreadfully uncomfortable about the consequences of his sin, both in his own personal life and in his social relationships. A man cannot begin at birth again, but he may be 'born from above.' This experience does not give him a new body, neither does it provide him with a new soul. It does, however, alter the direction of the latter. If his body has been broken by sin, it would appear it must remain so, but even here one cannot dogmatize, because there is a mysterious and unsolved relationship of mind and body confronting us.[1]

A mind, or a soul, which has felt the healing springs of divine grace may do something—and, indeed, we have no right to say it cannot do anything—to repair the broken temple of the Holy Spirit, namely, the body; and may partially allay the dire consequences of sin because of the healthy reaction of the redeemed soul upon the physical organism. If man is a 'body-mind,' as Mr. Bertrand Russell suggests, functioning in complete unity, this argument seems to me to be sound. I know that regeneration or forgiveness may not alter the 'genes,' which are the carriers of disposition, but it will help a man to see that his inherited disposition is controlled by the highest ends which he visualizes. His desires are for good things, and his thoughts are upon worthy objects now. His disposition will be disciplined accordingly. The *access of newly felt power lifts* his mind to wider and higher horizons of service and of joy.

But, you will say, will he not be miserable in reflecting upon the evil consequences of his deeds upon others whose lives have been spoiled and started on the wrong

[1] See my *Ourselves and Reality*, chap. xv., for various theories of relation of body and mind.

way by his example? He feels, indeed, that he is his brother's keeper. Does forgiveness of a man's personal sin undo all that complicated mesh of evil influence which he has shed about him? Here again one can only conjecture as to the solution of such a difficulty. First, it is obviously true that a man who has an experience of personal forgiveness will make it his first business, as far as he may, to repair the damage which he has caused in the lives of others. This may be a task never to be completed in this life, but his activity is not only spent in that direction, but he is now doing other definite good, which, by its penetrating influence in his social relationships, will partly redress the balance for his past sinful life. If we cannot dogmatize on the relation of a regenerated mind upon a body impaired by sin, how dare we dogmatize on the question of *the influence of the Spirit of God through a redeemed soul upon others who were harmed by that soul in its unregenerate state?*

I have pointed out these difficulties because, personally, I consider the social aspects of the problem of forgiveness the most difficult part of the subject, and the most complicated. But, whatever the problems are which remain over after our personal consciousness of forgiveness, we must not forget—nay, we cannot forget—the accompanying joy which is unspeakable in the heart of every believer, which drives him out as a lamp taken to a dark place to make the world a brighter and a more Christ-like place, and to make his contribution to the bringing in of the Kingdom of God.

E. The death of Jesus occupies a great deal of space in the gospel narratives. The story of the last week of His life and the details of the Passion narrative are clearly out of proportion to the time which they occupied. The death of Jesus was regarded as such a tragedy by His followers that it produced a profound impression upon the memory of their generation. The

ignominy, shame, and racking pain which death upon the cross involved would by their very shock and horror indelibly engrave themselves upon the hearts of those who revered and loved the Master.

It is agreed by all Christians that the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ must always remain one of the most significant and startling facts of human history. However we may conceive of the personality and mission of Jesus, the very fact that such a loving, strong personality, with such a fine purpose, should have been brought to an untimely and violent end is a fact that demands explanation and challenges thought. The Cross of Christ is a turning-point in history, and a signpost for all ages. It is an historical fact, and man is bound to take notice of it. The pages of history are full of tragedies, but this is perhaps the greatest of tragedies—that such a powerful, wise, and pure soul should have been so foully done to death.

The Cross reveals in the most dramatic fashion the secret motives that frequently control the human mind ; it throws a sudden and disturbing light upon the constitution of human society and the consequences involved for any person who attempts to challenge and reform it ; it lays bare the cruelty, injustice, and cowardice of which even respectable, religious, and good men are capable.

But the death of Jesus tells us not only about the blindness and frailty of man. It speaks to us about Jesus Christ Himself ; His teaching and His purpose. For it is quite clear that if only Jesus had decided to abandon His mission of world redemption, if He only had just moderated His claims a little, or even pursued His purpose on other lines, He need not have died on the cross.

But we need to remember that the death of Jesus was no accident, no culminating event resultant upon the combination of circumstances. It was not produced by

a morbid love of a spectacular death ; nor was it a daring and reckless adventure that brought Jesus to His end. The Cross was inevitable, but it is difficult to say wherein lay the inevitability ; perhaps because we have so little experience of perfect love of man and complete fidelity to the light, and do not share His experience of sinlessness. Those who are unwilling to admit the uniqueness of Christ, and His deliberate acceptance of the Cross as a way of redeeming the human race, seek for explanations and motives of His death which find no support in the Gospels. For instance, some think that the death of Jesus was just a tragic miscarriage of justice ; an unfortunate accident of human circumstances which entangled an innocent Person. They say, therefore, that His death was a pure martyrdom, and just another illustration of how this cruel world treats the tender and pure. The answer to this explanation is to be found in the fact that Jesus clearly foresaw His death ; that, foreseeing it, He did not try to escape it. He consciously and deliberately walked into the zone of danger. His challenge and His claims delivered Him up into the hands of His foes.

Another explanation of His death is that if it was inevitable in this way, and had been predestined by prophecy, this inevitability would give the impression of morbidity and unreality. Yet this can be countered by thinking of the passages in the Gospel where Jesus deliberately evaded capture, at times removing Himself from an area where danger openly threatened Him. He seems to look forward to His death with sorrow and shrinking, which together culminate in the agony of Gethsemane. The death of Jesus was thus not merely an external necessity, nor some morbid obsession.

Another attempt at an explanation of the death of Jesus is that it was apocalyptic. That is to say, He discovered the wheel of the world's progress going round so slowly that He considered it His duty to throw

Himself upon it to hasten its speed, but in doing so His mangled remains were the penalty. This explanation endeavours to indicate that Jesus was forced to climb the Cross in the hope that He might set in motion that catastrophic coming of the Kingdom which He thought His violent death might achieve. This dream is a dream of a mind almost unhinged, impatient of the moral struggles involved to achieve character and true life, and does not fit in with the ethical views of Jesus as our Redeemer-God.

There are a few passages which indicate that Jesus believed in the sudden coming of a new Kingdom and a catastrophic closing of the present world order of His day, but it is dangerous indeed to build upon such few passages an apocalyptic doctrine which ignores the progressive realization of the Kingdom of God through the moral and spiritual struggles of men and women in fellowship with Christ. The truth is, that it is not possible to explain the attitude of Jesus toward His death and His recognition of its necessity unless we are prepared to acknowledge that Jesus was a unique Person with a unique mission. The complete explanation of His acceptance of the Cross is only to be found in a complete doctrine of His Person as human and divine, and in the recognition, further, of the fact that His death is the only means of redeeming the world. The clue to the psychology of Christ's mind means nothing less than this, and the part that He Himself played in the events that faced Him.

Jesus foresaw His death, and identified Himself with the suffering servant of Isa. liii. and with the true Messianic rule of the Son of Man. From the very beginning of His ministry He seems to have been aware that it would end in the Cross. His acceptance of the Cross in the Fourth Gospel is pushed back to the very beginning of His ministry, where John the Baptist hails Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

This certainly involves the conception of the Lamb being slain as a sacrifice for that purpose. His conversation with Nicodemus about the Son of Man being lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness certainly indicates that Jesus was thinking of the Cross. A similar explanation to John is found in the Synoptics. Jesus, early in His ministry, expected He would die on a cross. The second chapter of Mark tells us of Himself and His disciples like a wedding-party. He warns them that, while He is the Bridegroom, the day will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away from them. This is a premonition of the impending danger He had to face, and the Cross consequent upon it. Nothing further is actually recorded in Mark's Gospel about the necessity of His death until after Peter's confession, when Jesus immediately began to teach that the Son of Man must suffer and that He must make His way to Jerusalem.

It is remarkable that no sooner had Jesus received the clear confession of His Messiahship from Peter than He should commence to instruct His disciples that the Messiah must suffer. Like most historical crises, the death of Jesus was the resultant of many converging and crossing movements, and is set in the midst of very complicated events. The Gospels make it clear that the high ethical standard of His teaching made the religious leaders of His time feel very uncomfortable. Further to exasperate another section of the community by the height of His personal claims the Pharisees and the Sadducees come into these two categories, and the Fourth Gospel brings out most clearly that it was not only the claim to stand in an intimate and unique relationship with God which amounted to a claim to divinity which incurred the most hostility. Further, we have to remember that the teaching of Jesus concerning Himself was running counter to the theological conceptions of His day. Consequently, when Caiaphas interpreted Christ's claim to Messiahship as blasphemy before the

Ecclesiastical Court and His sedition before the Imperial Court, the day was carried, the people being in a ferment, and roused by false expectations as well as the extremely unstable character of the social order of Palestine. All these were being engendered by the ministry of Jesus, and the menace of Roman interference in producing the actual Crucifixion could easily be brought about by the subtlety of Caiaphas. Jesus was dangerous, religiously and socially—unsettling the Church and the State (as He is always doing), and Caiaphas and those in power did not want any changes which might deprive them of their prestige and situation. But the strange thing about it all is that, although the death of Jesus, humanly speaking, was produced by an extremely complicated situation which reveals how human sin has cemented an order of outlook, thought, and social structure, which makes the coming of the Kingdom of God something which men hate and fear and cannot tolerate, the main fact remains that *Jesus was not at the mercy of these events*, for He says, ' My hour is not yet come.' The chief priest said, ' Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar amongst the people.' But the wonderful fact is, He was crucified on the feast day at the time they liked least and when He chose to die. In the great drama of the Crucifixion the divine purpose seems to dominate human events, and the decisions of high priests and the Roman procurator seem but small satellites to the great Star of the eternal purpose of God which culminated in the death of the Lord Jesus.

Thus far I have described in brief the death of Jesus from the gospel point of view. I now propose to state briefly several theories of the Atonement which have been held in the history of the Church.

It is significant that the Church is committed to no theory of Atonement, and that the Apostles' Creed simply states Jesus was crucified for us under Pontius

Pilate, He suffered and was buried ; thus referring us to the historical fact for revelation and to the contemplation of the Cross as the means of redemption. The Cross cuts right down through all the complications of human circumstance—the camouflages of human motives, the disintegrating social structure and movements of mankind—and *uncovers the fundamental sin that underlies them all.* The Cross reveals sin in its true nature. No man can know what sin is unless he looks at it from the point of view of the Cross. At the same time the Cross has revealed another movement and wonderful fact, namely, *the love of God in all its infinite worth and splendour and power*, as the only force capable of purifying and redeeming the world.

> O Love of God, O sin of man,
> In this dread act your strength is tried ;
> And victory remains with Love,
> For Love Himself was crucified.

F. The early Church was concerned more with the problem of the Person of Christ than with the problem of the Atonement. The early fathers spoke in the language of the New Testament in the main, and were content with that. Reflection on the subject of the death of Christ began about the beginning of the third century. It was thought for a very considerable period that Christ's death was a ransom paid to the Devil. This view was held in the main from the time of Origen (A.D. 185 to 254) to the time of Anselm (A.D. 1033 to 1109). This theory was advocated by St. Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, and others. In one form or another, this theory of the ransom paid to the Devil was dominant until driven from the field by Archbishop Anselm, who produced a theory which at any rate, despite its manifest defects, is more adequate.

Anselm's view of the Atonement gave rise to the theory of satisfaction. This theory says that satisfaction

is due to God's honour on account of human sin. It says that God cannot forgive the sinner unless he is punished, for to do so he would have to treat both sinless and sinner on the same basis. The honour of God demands that sin should be punished. Anselm's theory, however, says that God in His mercy accepts 'satisfaction' instead of the punishment of the sinner. The 'satisfaction' is made by the death of Jesus, who gave Himself up for the glory of God for which He was not a debtor. The third theory of Atonement, which is perhaps the most momentous in the Church's history, is that of Abelard (A.D. 1070 to 1142), Anselm's contemporary. *For Abelard the Cross of Jesus is primarily the supreme manifestation of redeeming love.* 'Our redemption is that highest love in us brought about by the Passion of Christ—a love which not only sets us free from the slavery of sin, but acquires for us the true liberty of the sons of God, that we may be filled with love rather than with all fear of Him who showed us so great grace, than which His own witness none greater can be found.' Abelard's theory seems to be perfectly sound in the sense that it indicates how God reveals his love to us in this supreme way; but it does not indicate how the death of Christ engenders love within us and produces the sense of forgiveness of sin.

Luther's significance for a true view of the Cross is very important. Perhaps no theologian in the Church's history has so preserved the real actuality of the depth and variety of the New Testament conception of the Atonement. Luther brought Paul out of the dust of mediaeval controversy and placed him upon a pedestal which Protestants have preserved. Luther certainly preserved the greatness of Anselm's theory, but in redirecting it from a narrow satisfaction theory to the rich profusion of the Bible he far surpassed Anselm. Luther felt the word satisfaction (*Genungtuung*) to be too weak a word. 'Even if it is desirable to retain the

word " satisfaction," and to mean by it that Christ has done enough for our sins, it is still too weak and too small to express the grace of Christ, and it does not sufficiently appreciate the sufferings of Christ, to which greater honour must be rendered ; for He not only made satisfaction for our sins, but also freed us from death, the Devil, and the power of hell, and thus confirmed to us an eternal Kingdom of Grace and Forgiveness for all remaining sins.'[1]

Luther brings out three significant points in his interpretation of the Cross :

1. He regards the Cross as a decisive fight against the powers of evil ruling over men's lives.

2. He brings the Cross into the closest possible connexion with the Resurrection. Christ is the Mighty One, the Victor.

3. Luther revived the New Testament theology of the Cross because he regarded Christ's substitution *for us* and Christ's power *in us* as an indivisible unity. Christ not only suffers in us, but He draws us into His suffering.

The Reformation theory of the Atonement is that of penal substitution. On this view God is regarded as angry. His attitude to the sinner is one of wrath. The punishment of sin is demanded by the Justice of God. In His death it is said that Christ becomes the sinner's representative or substitute, and as such bears the punishment of sin. The demands of justice on this theory are satisfied, and God ceases to be angry with the sinner ; but the slightest reflection on this theory indicates its inadequacy. A perfectly just God could not punish a perfectly just Son for the sins of others without being unjust. It is the moral problem created by the theory of substitution which is its undoing. The death of Christ makes a difference in the relation of God and man, but it is not a difference merely between a

[1] *Mysterium Christi*, p. 196.

judge and the condemned, but one between Father and Son.

The satisfaction theory and the substitution theory have been attacked in many ways. Some have said that Christ saves by His death and example, that the Cross is only significant in that it opens the way to the Resurrection. Karl Barth has done a great service to the Protestant world in thrusting us back upon the conception that the Christian religion is the redemptive religion ; that man cannot be saved by example and teaching and friendship, even though these appertain to Christ. It is the redemptive power of God through the Cross that is the great ' moment ' of redemption.

The theory of penal substitution, however, has dominated the thought of most evangelical Churches up to our times. Many attempts have been made in the last hundred years to re-state the doctrine of the Atonement. Dr. Scott Lidgett seems to interpret the Cross in the light of the Fatherhood of God and the spiritual obedience of Christ. He says, ' Our Lord in His death fulfilled all the conditions of filial satisfaction. He tasted to the full of those penal conditions which revealed the wrath of God against sin.'

The meaning of the Cross, however, is perhaps to be sought for in other directions. There is what is known as the Penitence Theory, advocated by McLeod Campbell in his work, *The Nature of the Atonement.* In this volume he contends that Christ offered to God for man perfect vicarious penitence. Man, being sinful, cannot offer penitence, therefore the sinless one offered it instead.

Dr. Moberley, in his *Atonement and Personality*, has the same thought. The difficulty of this view of the Atonement, however, is that it is inconceivable to imagine how penitence can be produced where guilt does not exist. It is impossible to imagine a perfect Person being penitent. He can be sorry for others, but not penitent

for them. It is not my business, however, here to criticize theories of Atonement in detail. I am just making a few observations on the way.

When, however, we look for a solution of the mystery of the Atoning Work of Christ, it would seem that we must start with the nature of our God in our consideration of the problem. God, being Father, does not desire that one of His children should perish. Like Daniel Peggotty's search for little Emily, where he says 'I will go until I drop dead. If I find my Emily I am content,' it seems that the Atonement is the revelation of the unwearied, unconquerable love of God which will go to the extreme limits of eternal love to redeem the race.

I have no hesitation personally in saying we must start with the conception of the doctrine of the Atonement from the standpoint of the Christian revelation of God, and if we do this we shall discover that Father is greater than judge, that the moral governor of the universe is a being who is Love, and that mercy and justice are not conflicting attributes of the nature of God, but are the same, the essence of God being love and justice, or, to put it in a better way, His essence is Holy-Love.

I have only briefly here indicated a few of the different theories of Atonement. None would be regarded as final or satisfactory. The amazing fact of the death of Jesus produces its effect upon the mind and hearts of His followers in such a way as to defy analysis, and to challenge the powers of human thought in their endeavour to grasp what is beyond their strength. It is the fact of the Atonement that matters to us, and the experience of that fact, whatever theory or theories we may entertain.

ERNEST G. BRAHAM.

LET US PRAY:

We beseech Thee, O God, that as we rejoice in the sureness of Thy mercy towards us, we may remember that forgiveness belongeth unto Thee that Thou mayest be feared. Keep back Thy servants from all presumptuous sins that they may not have dominion over us. Let Thy pardoning grace awaken in us in fuller measure the sense of Thy Holy Presence and a sensitive awareness that Thou art righteous in all Thy ways. Save us from self-deception and self-complacency of spirit. Show us, as our souls can bear, the revelation of our secret sins which are in the light of Thy countenance. In the light of our knowledge of what Thou art, may we lose our love of sin, and the glamour and fascination of it. Especially, O Lord, forgive us our easy handling of things divine. And as we discover afresh that we are forgiven in order that we may forgive, and saved that we may serve, let our lips be touched with a live coal from off Thine altar, that our iniquity may be taken away and our sin purged in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

LET US SING:

Tune: 'Ombersley.'

Purge me from every sinful blot,
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from every sinful thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind that was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to Thee.

O that I now from sin released,
Thy word may to the utmost prove,
Enter into the promised rest,
The Canaan of Thy perfect love.

III

THE ASSURANCE OF RECONCILIATION AND ITS JOY

The word reconciliation does not come so readily to our lips as it did to the Methodists of an earlier generation. We must allow for natural changes in our vocabulary ; but that is not the sole reason in this instance ; it is, I think, that we rather resent the somewhat confident way in which the great concerns of the soul's relationships with God have been discussed. These are not so simple as they once appeared to be, and we prefer a mystery to the lucidity of writers who confess to nothing less than omniscience ; even when these same writers have made a name for themselves in the realm of fiction.

When the word reconciliation is still retained, it is repudiated in Charles Wesley's setting by a number of people. ' No,' they say, ' I will not sing " My God is reconciled." ' There are others who would keep the hymn, because, like so many of Charles Wesley's, it takes you to the very centre. Few Methodists, I should hope, can sing the whole verse without some emotion of soul :

> My God is reconciled,
> His pardoning Voice I hear,
> He owns me for His child,
> I can no longer fear,
> With confidence I now draw nigh,
> And Father, Abba, Father ! cry.

Must we ask the Hymn-Book Committee, then, to alter the first line, even if they spoil the poetry, as revisers of hymns so often do ? We might suggest to the sensitive the experience of a Cornish Methodist, who had made an unseemly amount of money. ' How

can you sing "Take my silver and my gold?"' a faithful friend once asked him. 'I don't,' he said; 'I 'um it.'

Now, it often happens that we are called back to the highways of Methodism by outsiders. Here, for example, is what Dr. Garvie says: 'If God may be spoken of as in Christ propitiatory, why may we not speak of Him as reconciled?'

Or here again is Dr. Denney, saying, 'The initiation in reconciliation is with God; but the reconciliation is mutual. It is a reconciled God to whom man is reconciled. Forgiveness is no less a real experience for God than for man; for to forgive makes a difference, as well as to be forgiven.' There is reason to pause, then, before we scrap Charles Wesley's theology. I think the reason why the objection to the idea of God being reconciled is maintained, is because we have read into the whole context thoughts of God which are not an integral part of reconciliation at all. God does not look upon the human race with anger, only consenting to relent because of Christ's death upon the cross. Whatever is true that is not, for 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.'

On the other hand, reconciliation is not fully apprehended by the person who contends that it is always and only subjective; that it is simply man's response to the appeal of God.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son was not intended by Jesus to give a final and complete revelation of God the Father. Many of our theological troubles arise from rearing top-heavy structures on slender foundations. We are certainly right in regarding the solicitude and whole-hearted welcome of the father as an illustration of the love and forgiveness of God. But that is not all. There are passages which refer to the wrath of God, and speak of Him as 'a consuming fire.' All the materials must be employed by those who

would build up a true and adequate doctrine of God.

If we turn to the greatest of all passages on reconciliation (Rom. v. 6–11), we cannot easily dismiss from our minds all thought of God being reconciled. Like so many of the great passages in Paul's writings, it almost frightens us by its daring, its insight, and its resolute grasp; genius and inspiration co-operate. 'Christ died for the ungodly' is the granite-like foundation upon which he builds. But we are not to think of this as the offering of the Son to an offended Father. Wherever Milton got his theology from, he did not consult St. Paul when he represented the Son bargaining with the Father; for it was by the death of Christ that God commended His love toward us.

But Paul speaks also of 'the wrath of God.' God's love and God's wrath are both real. Through the death of Christ for us, a reconciliation has taken place, and this leads to the rejoicing which is ever the experience of a soul at home with God. We may not be able to harmonize these realities, but realities they are. We only make trouble for ourselves and those we teach, if we ignore one half of the truth, and with the other half, erect a trim little temple which needs buttressing from the very first.

It may not be easy to breathe in these high altitudes of apostolic thought, but we know our feet are on firm ground when we say: 'Christ died for the ungodly.'

> Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
> In my place condemned He stood;
> Sealed my pardon with His blood;
> Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

'We have now received the reconciliation.'

To probe this truth a little more deeply, let us glance briefly at the history of the idea of reconciliation in the religions of the world, and then at the history of Paul's own religious experience. We may say in advance, that

it is to the latter of these two we should be the more largely indebted if our investigations were complete.

The study of religion and religions, as I need not remind those fortunate students and professors who have ample leisure, is most fascinating. We have one issue settled for ever to begin with ; we know now that man is naturally, universally, and we might say inveterately, religious. The study of religion presupposes facts which are not congenial to people who believed that this teeming world came spick and span from the hand of the Creator a little more than six thousand years ago. I sometimes think that the reason why people cling to the story of Adam and Eve as a scientific and final account of the origin of the human race is because it saves them trouble. We none of us enjoy being perplexed and humiliated. All the same, the Valley of Humiliation is a part of the pilgrim journey. It is congenial to the natural man to be confident.

When once we are in possession of a complete theological outfit, we can be as oracular as the Fundamentalist, the Christian Scientist, and the Pope. Rome is always an attraction for 'Weary Willies.' But to Methodists of our generation this particular avenue of escape no longer makes an appeal.

The story of religion, then, is a long one ; and its earlier stages are still obscure. It used to be said that the first chapter in its history was Animism ; but now we are told that this phase must be prefaced by another. Be it so ; at whatever stage we begin our study we recognize that reconciliation was the need and quest of haunted souls. Spirits, evil spirits, everywhere, held the people in the bondage of fear. There was a stage, no doubt, when escape from the malevolent power of these spirits was the desire of all men. They felt, as Caliban did, when he discussed his god Setebos :

> The best way to escape his ire
> Is not to seem too happy.

Traces of Animism are, no doubt, to be found in the Old Testament. Nor is it extinct to-day, as we know ; but, wherever it exists, there is a sense of fear, of tension, of dreadful possibility. Escape is impossible ; is there any hope of reconciliation ?

Now, though there are fragments of ancient beliefs and practices in the records of the Old Testament, it is there, and there alone, we behold the emergence of a race of royal souls inspired of God, and enriching the world for all time with two assured truths : first, that there is one God, and only one ; and secondly, that this God is holy, just, and loving. It is impossible to estimate too highly the debt the world owes to the Hebrew prophet. With fear gripping at the hearts of the people, with corruption surging in from surrounding nations, with a ritual which often contained elements of barbarism, these prophets elevated the race by giving them a lofty conception of deity, and preparing the way for the final revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The teaching of the prophets was fulfilled and sublimated by Christ. He gave the world thoughts of God which were, and are, and ever will be a comfort to troubled and trembling hearts. Men were taught to approach God as a child coming to a parent. The great and supreme act of reconciliation is no longer in doubt when we are able to say, ' God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.'

Was there ever a more dramatic and thrilling moment in the history of our sin-torn and terrified world, with its long-drawn-out tragedy of struggle and strife, than when the angels sang the song of reconciliation, ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace ' ? Of this glorious reconciliation Paul was to become the inspired exponent. He knew from his own experience what it meant.

We turn for the story of all this to that marvellous

piece of autobiography in the seventh of Romans ; ' A creature of the flesh, in the thraldom of sin,' is the description he gives of himself. ' I cannot be as good as I want to be, and I do wrong against my wishes. Who will rescue me ? ' Peace, harmony, and love are attributes of God. And so it is with all His works, which have not been disturbed by Sin. The sun moves round the world in majesty ; seasons come and go with rhythmic sweetness ; nature clothes herself in beauty each summer, and then sinks into sleep again ; the heavens are glorious in their ordered movement. Paul had such thoughts and yearnings as these, we may be sure. ' There is,' he says in one of his most rapturous passages, ' there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.' The whole of that wonderful resurrection chapter, indeed, vibrates with the triumph of reconciliation. ' He must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet.' ' The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' It is as much as to say, what cannot be reconciled shall be extinguished ; and the final triumph is victory over death—Christ's victory and ours.

Now, can any one believe that the experience which Paul has described in such vivid terms had no effect upon his theology ? Why, there is no theology with the breath of life in it which has not come out of experience, for, as J. R. Illingworth says, ' Christianity refuses to be proved first, and practised afterwards ; its practice and its proof go hand in hand.'

Paul knew that the war which had raged in his own heart rages in other hearts also ; that humanity strives with futile pain and sacrifice to deliver itself from the tyranny of sin. To him Christ was the Reconciler ; He made peace by His death on the cross.

We sometimes find ourselves in conditions which make theological discussion appear almost as irrelevant as though someone should stand amid exploding shells,

on a blood-stained battle-field, and discourse on the loveliness of gardens, or the exquisiteness of Honiton lace. It is not really so, for both conduct and daily bread are vitally related to theology. So it may be that the sharpest indictment to be passed on the religious life of to-day is to say that we have lost interest in reconciliation with God, and croon mildly over broad-mindedness and good nature.

When Jesus spoke of the dangers of religion, He singled out three in particular: the danger of the hardened heart—'some fell by the wayside'; the danger of a superficial religion—'some fell on stony places, where there was no deepness of earth'; and the danger of the preoccupied mind—'some fell among thorns.'

I think the greatest danger of the three to-day is superficial religion. This is a religion which consists of easy attachments to the Church for the sake of friendship and the pleasant hour. To such people the experience of Paul reads almost like the frantic words of an unbalanced mind. Religion must go deep if we are to share either in the assurance or the joy of reconciliation. The wrath of God is not a reality with us unless we feel the hideousness of sin. Otherwise we reduce the work of Christ to sane teaching and a great example; the atonement becomes a stumbling-block.

There is a story of a little girl who had done something wrong. Her mother, rather unwisely, perhaps, said, 'Now, go upstairs and tell God about it.' She did, and in a very few moments came tripping down in excellent humour. 'Did you tell God, Nellie?' 'Yes, mother, and God said, "Please don't mention it, Miss Nellie."'

'Please don't mention it!' It is not really very serious; a common infirmity; a weakness of the flesh; an almost amiable defect. Reconciliation! Why reconciliation? And yet, this is the very root

of that tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. On every hand is strain, dissension, and fear. Not yet has man attained that calm and central peace for which even the greatest of Roman poets longed. 'Happy was he whose wit awaited to grasp the origin of things; who trampled low the thronging horrors of unpitying death and soarings of unsated Acheron.'

And yet, through Jesus Christ, it is within the reach of all men. 'We have received the reconciliation.' Nation still looks with jealous eyes upon nation, and wonders what fell deed is being meditated. Treaties are interpreted to justify the very armaments they were intended to destroy. Within the circle of Church and family there frequently is strife. Civilization too often turns back upon its tracks. Education mocks us by teaching us to slay our brother man by devices too barbaric for the savage. Even the League of Nations cries aloud for a spiritual dynamic. What is our hope?

I say confidently, and yet joyfully, the reconciliation which is the basis of all peace is between man and God. So long as nations speak and act as though there were no God, they will chafe and fret and slay one another. 'Be ye reconciled to God' is the apostolic word for our day; and if we have no use for such a word, it is high time we returned to the New Testament, and to Charles Wesley's hymns.

RICHARD PYKE.

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Stella.'

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain—
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain ;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away.

Father, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far,
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
Thy arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste and live.

With faith I plunge me in this sea,
Here is my hope, my joy, my rest ;
Hither, when hell assails, I flee,
I look into my Saviour's breast :
Away, sad doubt and anxious fear !
Mercy is all that's written there.

Fixed on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay ;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away :
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.

An Act of Intercession.

Let us Pray :

For all those troubled by misgiving concerning Thy Fatherly care and overburdened with fear for the morrow,

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For those who are hurt and hindered by doubts that will not let them rest in Thee, and for all who have lost the blessed assurance of Thy forgiving love,

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For all who have sold their birthright for a morsel of meat ; for all who have forgotten Thee, and for those who fear at times that Thou hast forgotten them,

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For those who dwell in darkness and have no light, for all who bear their burdens of misgiving and unfaith alone ; and for all who, being over sensitive, condemn themselves whom Thou dost not condemn,

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

Benediction :

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

And may the peace of God which passeth all understanding guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

VI

THE METHODIST EXPERIENCE IN SONG

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Councillor Herbert Ibberson
United Methodist Church

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Noel F. Hutchcroft, L.R.A.M.
Wesleyan Methodist Church

Methodism was born and cradled in a joyous outburst of song. The hymns of Charles Wesley enshrine the genius of Methodism. The Evangelical Revival breathes and throbs through them. The Methodists have ever been a singing people. Like the Lollards, and the followers of Luther, the early Methodists sang the gospel message to their neighbours and friends. The hymns of the Methodists are the best interpretation of the doctrines, experience, and responsibilities of Methodism. To the souls of men longing for personal salvation, they point the way and tell the joy of finding. In spiritual depth and tenderness, the contribution they make to the enrichment and discipline of the Christian life is unique in the literature of devotion.

I

METHODISM AND SONG

I FEEL that it was inevitable that in such a series of meetings as this there should be one that deals with 'Methodism and Singing,' for next to the Bible the book most valued by our fathers and mothers was the *Hymn-Book*. The basis of music is emotion, resulting from experience and a recognition of the place. Music, particularly singing, has filled in our Methodist history. It must be given its place in our public worship and private devotions. As the large variety of hymns and tunes provides means for the expression of every changing experience, I deprecate very much the habit which some people have of trying to belittle certain hymns and tunes which at the moment make no appeal to them. A noted preacher makes great sport of that great hymn, 'Lead, kindly light,' and many do this with certain lines in such hymns as 'Father, I know that all my life,' &c. There are times when many of our hymns make no special appeal to us and touch no responsive chord, but there come to us all periods when we recognize that, after all, such sentiments and expressions of emotion are not quite strange.

This kind of thing is only a little removed from the wickedness of the person who parodies, and destroys, in so doing, words and tunes which do really mean a great deal to some worshippers. Many of our sacred hymns and tunes are debased in this way. I will not use an example of a hymn, although I could give several, but how many of us can listen to the singing of 'The Village Blacksmith' or 'The Lost Chord' without wishing to wring the neck of some clever person (with a quarter of the wit of the men who wrote these

songs and words) who has made a mock of them. And about the tunes, too. What about the stark irreverence of a man (if it was a man) who first started ' On Ilkla Moor baht 'at ' to that fine old tune ' Cranbrook.' I would make such things as these offences punishable at law. We ought to be innocent of such practices in ourselves and discountenance them in others. There is no need to despise some of our popular hymns and songs which may have small literary merit but which many people find to be a fitting medium for the expression of their religious emotions. It is mere pedantry to shut out certain hymns and tunes because their literary or artistic merits, judged by technical tests, may be open to criticism.

The more correctly and adequately our emotions can be expressed the better, but the expression of our emotion is the thing that most matters, and many of our hymns, though lacking in literary merit, have enabled men and women to get nearer to God. Methodists above all other people have a place for song. ' Sir,' Dr. Johnson said of the sons of Pembroke College, Oxford, ' we are a nest of singing-birds.' The same may be said of true Methodists.

H. Ibberson.

II

METHODISM'S MESSAGE IN SONG

SURELY there is a strange significance in associating Sheffield with the soul-stirring songs of Methodism. Here, in a city where the seeds of secession were sown, we envisage the coming re-union in an age than which none in history has more needed a united witness. Sheffield, where Methodism's greatest bard bared his breast to the threatening sword of a brutal army officer, explores once again her spiritual heritage, led by the Spirit which first inspired her songs of worship.

THE FUNCTION OF SONG

Music, one of Heaven's most mysterious ministries, possesses a power over the soul we seldom attempt to analyse. Why have men always voiced the cry of their deepest nature in song? It is an art, yet more than an art. Behind it is a dynamic force which forbids silence. Cultured or crude, human nature through the ages has uttered in song its deepest ecstasy and its most poignant sorrow. It is an elemental necessity. Study the tale of any nation's life. Would you sense her sorrow and trace her triumphs? Her woes and exultation are alike told most faithfully by her singers; and the more profound her tragedy and varied her fluctuating fortunes the greater the wealth and variety of her minstrelsy.

THE CLARION OF REVOLUTION

When the month of May 1738 witnessed the vital events of the 21st and 24th, God gave to the world a new evangel. He released possibilities which were to change the entire language of the soul. Song, either

in verse or melody, is the creature of the deepest self. The unplumbed deeps of the soul must be moved in order to bring to the surface the purest pearls of art. It was only a year after his conversion that Charles Wesley caused Böhler to say, 'Had I a thousand tongues, I would praise Him with them all.' But God had already multiplied a thousandfold the poet's power. In spite of the suspicion with which men regard emotion, the well-springs of the soul are only touched by the most moving experiences. Stolid self-possession may achieve dignity in worship, but the world's soul leaps most willingly to join the song inspired in the abandon of surging passion. Therein lay the power of Methodism's minstrelsy. It was the voice of a spiritual revolution; a new message released from reborn hearts. God had broken through the cold resistance of formalism and had touched the souls of gifted men. Humanity must tell its truest story in song, and a new song was in its mouth.

Charles Wesley had entered into a heritage of poetic genius. His father was a poet of no mean power. But when the pierced hand of his own Saviour touched his restless soul, and only then, the spiritual and emotional revolution liberated the genius which was to conduct an awakened nation into the inner shrines of worship.

Charles Wesley

What vital issues can hang on a schoolboy's choice! Had Charles Wesley accepted the suggestion that he should become the adopted son and heir of a wealthy relative, God would have had to secure other means of giving Methodism her message in song. How strangely God prepared him for his work! He was kept apart from his elder brother, whose dominating personality might have hindered the development of

what was essentially his own. We love to return to the hour when John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed. But an equally vital hour came when, in the house of a 'poor ignorant mechanic who knows nothing but Christ,' Charles met his Lord. The birth-song of Methodism was the first creature of that awakened genius which sang, 'Where shall my wondering soul begin?' From that hour, through 6,500 hymns in 30 separate measures, all handled with perfect skill, he sang to the newly awakened conscience of England. To little children—'Gentle Jesus'—to Kingswood colliers; to malefactors under shadow of the scaffold; to labourers; to the penitent, the believer, and the saint, he was the voice of their greatest experience; the language that liberated the otherwise inexpressible.

A Goodly Company

The new voice in the nation's worship was resented at first by the conservative devotees of the old metrical versions of the Psalms, but it was inevitable that it should supplant the severer songs. A new power had arisen, and a new voice must express it. Charles Wesley sang the passion and ecstasy of confident experience. He told the wonderful new fact of a personal salvation. His father saw

> The Saviour of mankind
> Nailed to the shameful tree,

but he taught the world to sing:

> That sinner am I
> Who on Jesus rely,
> And come for the pardon *God cannot deny.*

John Wesley, less original, more measured and stately, enriched our heritage with translations of noble, quiet

assurance. From Rothe and Zinzendorf he gave us, 'Now I have found the ground' and 'Jesu, Thy blood and righteousness.'

Others shone in minor glory, paled by the brilliance of the greater stars. William Williams, friend of Whitefield and of the Countess of Huntingdon, lives in his great song, 'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah.' John Cennick, forerunner of the noble army of local preachers, gave us, among others, 'Lo, He comes with clouds descending' and 'Thou great Redeemer.' How often do we think of him when we sing his 'Grace' before our Quarterly Meeting teas? 'Hail, Thou once despised Jesus,' came from the soul of John Bakewell, a preacher who spent seventy years on active service.

It is almost unbelievable, save in the light of our opening claim, that an unlettered shoemaker, the despair, at sixteen years of age, of all the moral monitors of the village, Thomas Olivers of Tregynon, should have given us 'one of the noblest hymns in existence'—'The God of Abraham praise.'

Edward Perronet, of French descent, hemmed in with Wesley by the Bolton mob, hurled by them into the mud and later a witness of Wesley's strange power to quieten the rabble, left us 'All hail the power of Jesu's name.' Benjamin Rhodes, a Yorkshire convert of Whitefield's, lives on in 'My heart and voice I raise.'

Had Charles Wesley been denied to us, there would have been a more generous flow from the fountains of these men of God, but, even so, greatest and least, they have voiced the experience for which Methodism must continue to stand if she is to be faithful to her heritage and commission.

What of the Future?

Does it exceed the limits of our commission to say that, while the basic facts of Methodist experience

remain unchanged, there is ever-increasing need for the Church of to-day to do what Charles and John Wesley did? Can we revise and adapt our peculiar message for the new and difficult present age? In our great Central Missions we often neglect the mighty theological and experiential hymns of our fathers. A popular chorus hymn may be, indeed *is*, a great power and inspiration, but we must not allow our greater possessions to be neglected. The primitive (and often archaic) language of noble hymns can be meaningless to many modern ears, especially those of youth. Let us be hospitable to the new voice, in hymn and in harmony; that, as the Wesleys met the need of their age, so we may modernize (for that is what they did) our vital message.

It may be judged a commonplace to say that the world is hungry for Christ. But only a Christ who is understood can appeal to them. England is nauseated by the effect of the non-Christian ethic. Revival is undoubtedly coming. We can speed its advent by asking God's guidance in the task of translating the message of Wesley into the language of to-day, and offering it under the spell of one of God's greatest powers —the power of worship in song.

NOEL F. HUTCHCROFT.

VII

THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN

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The claim made for evangelical religion that it consists in right personal relations implies that it is essentially ethical. It is more than inward spiritual experience, and goes deeper than simply evangelistic fervour. It fulfils itself in character ; it is the most efficient and abiding constraint towards the good life ; it is the source and expression of the creative originality of love as the universal goodwill ; it possesses the dynamic forces for which ethical idealists of many types have looked in vain elsewhere. It presents the supremacy and sufficiency of the personality of Jesus as the One Ideal. Christlikeness is its last test and its final goal for Christian manhood. The way to this blessedness is the way of prayer. Its daily discipline is a sensitive conscience, exercising itself with things great and small in the responsibilities and privileges of stewardship in relation to the gifts and opportunities of life. The Message of Methodism must be charged afresh with this divine dynamic, if it is to restore by teaching and by the greater authority of personal example the ethical originality which is the efficient factor in evangelical religion. Our critics assert that in the lack of this factor the deficiencies of evangelical religion stand confessed. Partly, by no means only, on this account the accepted moral standard of the Christian tradition is being assailed as either impossible or undesirable. Not only the morality of sex, but the whole idea of self-denial and the service of the weak by the strong, is directly questioned.

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Lasus.'

Blest are the humble souls that see
Their emptiness and poverty ;
Treasures of grace to them are given,
And crowns of joy laid up in heaven.

Blest are the men of broken heart,
Who mourn for sin with inward smart ;
The blood of Christ divinely flows,
A healing balm for all their woes.

Blest are the souls that long for grace,
Hunger and thirst for righteousness ;
They shall be well supplied and fed,
With living streams and living bread.

Blest are the pure, whose hearts are clean
From the defiling power of sin ;
With endless pleasure they shall see
The God of spotless purity.

Blest are the sufferers, who partake
Of pain and shame for Jesu's sake ;
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord ;
Glory and joy are their reward.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

Loving the unlovable . . .	Matt. v. 43–48
Praying and Receiving . .	Matt. vii. 7–14
Redemption from Fear . . .	Luke xii. 31–37

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Shepherd.'

Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine,
The joy and desire of my heart,
For closer communion I pine,
I long to reside where Thou art :
The pasture I languish to find
Where all, who their Shepherd obey,
Are fed, on Thy bosom reclined,
And screened from the heat of the day.

Ah ! show me that happiest place,
The place of Thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstasy gaze,
And hang on a crucified God :
Thy love for a sinner declare,
Thy passion and death on the tree ;
My spirit to Calvary bear,
To suffer and triumph with Thee.

'Tis there, with the lambs of Thy flock,
There only, I covet to rest,
To lie at the foot of the rock,
Or rise to be hid in Thy breast ;
'Tis there I would always abide,
And never a moment depart,
Concealed in the cleft of Thy side,
Eternally held in Thy heart.

I

CHRISTLIKENESS

The essence of the Christian life is what the late Dr. Peake called 'the mystical union of Christ and the believer.' To this fact the New Testament and all the saints of the Christian Church bear witness. 'Christianity,' says Evelyn Underhill, 'is unique among the world's great religions in this: that its Founder is to His closest followers not merely a prophet, pattern of conduct, or divine figure revealed in the historic past, but the object here and now of an experienced communion of the most vivid kind.' This experience transforms the entire personality, and is the source of all the blessings and graces of the Christian life. 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation'; and, renewed in the image of Christ, he becomes Christlike in disposition and carriage. Christlikeness, then, is the outward manifestation of this inward experience which is the essence of the Christian life. Certainly all the graces and excellencies which are found in Christ are to be reproduced, according to the New Testament, in Christians; and without doubt men of the world expect to find them in all who bear the sacred Name.

In what way are Christians expected to be like Christ? No imitation of the outward characteristics of our Lord's earthly life is essential. When Jesus said, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me,' He surely did not mean that in all cases there must be a conformity to the outward pattern of His life on earth. There have been lives, it is true, which have thrilled the world by

their close resemblance, not only to the spirit, but to the form of our Lord's life. We think, for example, of Francis of Assisi in the Middle Ages and of Sadhu Sundar Singh in our day. These have been called perfect imitations of Christ. But such external conformity is not an essential part of the New Testament conception of Christlikeness, an interesting illustration of which is provided by Paul's admonition to the Christians at Corinth, 'Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ.' Now Paul's life in its great renunciation, its celibacy, its homelessness, its poverty, and its sufferings, was a remarkable imitation in outward circumstance of the life of Jesus, yet it is obvious that in urging these Corinthians to imitate him even as he imitated Christ he was thinking not of the outward form of his life, but of the spirit which animated it, a spirit which he had caught from Christ Himself, for nowhere does he call on them to change their type of life. Imitation of Christ, to Paul, is something which can be urged upon ordinary Christians, living a settled life and pursuing secular vocations, and in this he is in line with the witness of the New Testament as a whole. Dr. R. Mackintosh is right in saying that 'Christ cannot be truly followed by imitating Him in externals.' Christlikeness is something which can be manifested in any honourable calling, in any century and in any part of the world. It is universal in the range of its appeal. It relates, not to the outward mode of Christ's life, but to the spirit which lay behind it.

What was it, then, which inspired and infused the whole of Christ's earthly life? It was surely a passionate love for God, His Father. From that day when, as a boy of twelve in the Temple, He thrilled His parents by the way He said, 'Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's House?' to the day when He reclined His head in death upon the cross, saying, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,' this was His master

passion. From it there issued an intense love for men. This all-consuming love for God and man expressed itself in certain characteristic ways. His love for God was so dominating that all His supreme values were spiritual, and the love of money, of pomp and worldly glory, found no place in Him ; it enabled Him to triumph over the pull of the flesh, to put the Kingdom before the claims of loved ones, and to render to God a perfect obedience which refused not even the cross. His love for men likewise was so constraining that it made Him for their sakes devote Himself to a life of complete self-renunciation ; it enabled Him to love not only His friends but His enemies, and to display a spirit of unwearied patience and infinite forgiveness ; it filled Him with a wonderful compassion for all who suffered or were in need ; it clothed Him with meekness and humility ; and adorned Him with an exquisite tenderness to women and children.

This same constraining love for God and man may sway the hearts of men, and, wherever this happens, it manifests itself in much the same way as it did in Christ. The Christlike man of to-day will not, in most cases, feel called to take the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience, or to forsake his home and calling ; but he will hold this world's goods very lightly, he will put loyalty to the Kingdom before the claims of his family where there arises a seeming conflict of interest, and in everything he will manifest but one concern, and that, to know and to do the Father's will. In his relations with his fellow men, he will be known for his compassionate and tender nature, his meek and humble spirit, his readiness to serve and sacrifice, his forbearance in the time of provocation, his unfailing kindness to his enemies, and his willingness to forgive any wrong that has been done him. And, quite apart from these characteristic expressions, his Christlikeness will be immediately and obviously manifest to

those who come into contact with him. It will surround him like an atmosphere, so that his presence will be felt as the presence of Christ Himself. Men will see in his face the lovely lineaments of Jesus, and in their hearts will acknowledge the spell.

In his *Persecution in the Early Church*, Dr. Workman relates that when James of Cirta was being tried, the attention of the court was directed to a man in the crowd whose appearance suggested that he, too, was a Christian. He was arrested and charged. He confessed and was martyred. Concerning this unknown Christian, the ancient historian, from whom Dr. Workman has borrowed the story, records : ' Christ shone in his face and bearing.' We are not likely to get much nearer than this to the ultimate meaning of Christlikeness.

This touching fragment from an ancient chronicle illustrates the point we desire to consider next—the vital connexion between Christlikeness and the indwelling of Christ in the life. Christ shone in the face and bearing of this unknown but heroic Christian because He dwelt in the sanctuary of his soul. The secret of real Christlikeness is the mystic union of Christ and the believer. Many in our day are unable to accept this. The late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once said : ' I can more and more see that real Christianity is not a dogma or belief, but a habit of mind. If your mind is sweet and kindly, you are a Christian whatever you call yourself.' But it is not quite as simple as that. ' A mind sweet and kindly ' may mean much or little. There are many whose minds are normally quite sweet and kindly who could not pray on the cross, ' Father, forgive them.' There is a standard revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus which is beyond the reach of ordinary human nature. One need not be suspected of subscribing to the doctrine of Total Depravity or of maligning human nature if

one suggests that there are some things in the Sermon on the Mount which cut right across the grain of human nature, and are, humanly speaking, beyond us. Christianity may not be a dogma or a belief, but it certainly is more than having a sweet and kindly mind. It is the blessed indwelling in the heart of Him who is 'the flower of man and God,' whose abiding presence so transforms and renews the personality of the believer that he realizes and exhibits in his life, and sometimes in no small degree, the ideal which hitherto he had seen in Christ and vainly tried to attain. Indeed, in the case of the late Bishop Moorhouse, some time Bishop of Manchester, so remarkable was the transformation wrought by the indwelling Christ that it was said that with him 'the words of the Sermon on the Mount seemed not only possible, but the natural outcome of his state of mind.'

There are, it is true, some rare souls who without any experience of Christ's indwelling in the life have achieved a remarkable likeness to Christ. They are able to emerge successfully from some of the severest tests. Yet in these instances closer examination will often reveal a difference—sometimes obvious, sometimes indefinable—between them and the great saints of the Christian Church. They may be like Christ in the sense that a good portrait is like its subject, but they fail to convey the living divine presence itself as do the saints who are rich in Christian experience. In any case, however, these are exceptional people, of outstanding spiritual genius, from whom it is not safe to draw conclusions for ordinary people. For the vast majority of us, the only hope of achieving anything like Christlikeness lies in the cultivation of our spiritual experience of Christ.

The time allotted does not permit us to discuss this point any further. We hasten now to consider the appeal which Christlikeness makes to men. If we may

refer once more to the story of that unknown martyr, we would like to say that it gives us the clue to the amazing influence wielded by the early Christians over the pagan communities in which they lived. The early Church, faced with such overwhelming odds and assailed so often by bitter persecution, grew rapidly in numbers and in power, largely by the Christlikeness of so many of its members, who not only out-thought, but outlived, outloved, and outdied the pagan. Had the Church continued to hold before men this ideal, and to exemplify it, the world would surely have been won for Christ ere this. Unfortunately, in later centuries the ideal of Christlikeness was obscured, though never lost entirely. (Sometimes, indeed, the darkest ages have produced the most shining examples of it.) Many corrupting influences were at work. Less and less attention was paid to the spirit of Christ as manifested in His earthly life. He became more and more a theological divine figure, remote from the daily life and experience of men. The story is sad and familiar. The day soon came when wars were waged and cruelties perpetrated in the name of Christ. So blind did Christians become to the ethical significance of Christ and His Cross that the historian can say concerning the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, ' No barbarian, no infidel, no Saracen ever perpetrated such wanton and cold-blooded atrocities of cruelty as the wearers of the cross of Christ.' This appalling blindness to what is part of the deepest significance of Christianity was by no means confined to the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformers inherited it in large measure.

We owe it mainly to the Quakers that this ideal, so generally obscured and forgotten, has been restored to its rightful place. The influence upon all sections of Christendom of their witness to the importance and significance of Christ's earthly life, and of the spirit which animated it, is profound. As Methodists, we are

grateful that from the beginning Methodism has always realized the place love holds in the divine scheme of things, and by its doctrine of Perfection, which John Wesley defined as ' the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions,' has always kept the ideal of Christlikeness prominently before the eyes of its people. These last two generations have witnessed a further advance in the right direction. They have been remarkable for a new interest in the Jesus of history and for a new appreciation of His significance as a revelation of God and of God's will for human life. As a result of intensive modern research, the earthly life of Jesus is now better known and more accurately assessed than ever before. There is a new appreciation of what Christlikeness is, and a new understanding of its significance. This knowledge is broadcast everywhere, and is shared by those who are not Christians.

This new situation invests our subject with quite unique importance. More than ever men are demanding that Christians should be like Christ. It is amazing how accurately the world discerns the virtues which are typically Christlike. It is not enough for a Christian to tread the path of conventional rectitude. To be sober, to abstain from bad language, to be honest and thrifty, to be steady and industrious, to be devout and regular in attendance at divine worship, is not sufficient. These virtues are not distinctively Christian. The questions the world asks concerning a Christian are : Does he love money ? Is he dominated by self-interest ? Is he genuinely humble ? Does he love his enemies ? Is he ready to forgive those who have injured him ? Is he quick to take offence ? Does he lose his temper ? Is he a love-filled soul ? The world is right. These questions go straight to the heart of things. Only those who can triumphantly emerge from these tests will have any real influence for good on the men of

to-day. But we can rejoice in one thing : in these later days, as in the earlier days of the Christian Church, the Christlike life casts its spell over all who come within its orbit. Whether they be savages in the primeval forests, or desperadoes in the slums of a big city, or students at a great university, men still feel and acknowledge the magnetic charm of a David Livingstone, an Angel Adjutant, or a Henry Drummond.

And why, we may ask, has Christlikeness this power over men's hearts ? Because men see in it, not a human achievement, but an evidence of the supernatural. In the face of the Christlike man they see a light which they know was never seen on sea or land ; in his presence they catch a fragrance too rare to be of earth, a fragrance which seems to tell them of a divine presence within. In these days of intellectual perplexity, absorbing materialism, and restless strivings after men know not what, there is beneath it all much sincere searching for truth, a widespread deep hunger for a God of love ; and the Christlike man draws men of all types like a magnet, not only because he makes faith in the existence of a God of love easier, but because he actually mediates through his own personality to the aching hearts of men the warm, loving, living reality of the divine presence itself.

All of us, therefore, would do well to heed the word of that Christlike man, Murray McCheyne : ' Wherever you go, carry a savour of Christ.' Without this savour of Christ, our best efforts will fail ; with it, our poorest will succeed better than we know. Here, and here alone, lies the real power of the Church. The days are difficult ; a wave of secularism is breaking over the world which threatens to carry away with it the precious things for which we stand ; the future is uncertain ; but if only the Church in the days that lie ahead

of us can produce more and more Christians to whom could be applied the words which Jacopone the mystic addressed to his master, Francis of Assisi, 'Christ hath shown Himself in thee,' there will be nothing to fear.

H. T. WIGLEY.

LET US PRAY:

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels Thy blood
So freely spilt for me!

Grant me this grace, O Lord.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone:

Grant me this grace, O Lord.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean;
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within:

Grant me this grace, O Lord.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine!

Grant me this grace, O Lord.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above,
Write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of love.

Grant me this grace, O Lord.

HYMN:

Tune: 'Lloyd.'

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;
And, naked to Thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of Thy pure countenance.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labour vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy cross
Is better than the sun.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

II

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

One always hesitates to speak about 'the tendencies of the present age,' partly because no one is quite sure what they are, partly because it is too readily assumed that the present age is essentially different from its predecessors. We are often told that in our own day men have ceased to pray; but it is pertinent to inquire whether there has ever been a period in which the culture of the devotional life was a popular pursuit. The Golden Age of religion is still in the future, and it is only an extravagant and unwarranted idealization of the past that leads us to imagine that the modern man is peculiarly degenerate. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there is to-day a movement away from prayer which does not augur well for the future of religion, even though it sometimes invokes the authority of religion. Christianity is being interpreted by our contemporaries almost exclusively in terms of service. We have become impatient of a religion that is divorced from daily life, and of that type of religious experience which is nothing more than an escape from responsibilities and duties—a narcotic which distorts our vision of reality and blunts our sensibilities to the finer issues. And yet, although our favourite text is, 'Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' can it be said that we are doing the things which Christ commanded? That many are fighting a hard battle on the field of Christian service cannot be doubted, but too often they are overcome by a sense of their own futility, and by the constant fear of possible defeat. Life becomes a mere succession of duties, and we lose sight of its eternal significance since we are immersed in a morass of petty

detail. We spurn the religion of Mary, because rumour has it that the mystic is out of touch with reality, only to find that the religion of Martha is by no means as practical as it is commonly believed to be.

Well-doing is no longer an exhilarating adventure, but a burdensome concern, and the reason is not far to seek. We cannot serve aright unless we wait upon Him in whose service we are engaged, nor can we overcome the forces of darkness unless our souls are bathed in the eternal light. The essential element of Christian service is not doing this or that for another, but the giving of ourselves in friendship, and if our personal life is deprived of the love and holiness, the radiance and peace, that come of fellowship with God, it is not likely that we shall have a self worth giving. It is the love of God that keeps the love of man pure and strong and true. 'Think glorious thoughts of God,' said one of the saints, 'and serve Him with a quiet mind.'

The movement away from prayer is considerably strengthened by certain inferences drawn from the teaching of the New Psychologists—especially the very new ones. A term like 'auto-suggestion' is on everybody's lips, and the utterance of that mystic word is enough to shatter in the twinkling of an eye the majestic edifice of religious experience. Our psychologists might do worse than follow the example of the distinguished physicists who have lately taken to philosophy. Indeed, it does not require an elaborate philosophical training to appreciate that, even if auto-suggestion plays an important part in the life of prayer, the objective basis of prayer is not thereby undermined. Auto-suggestion may well prove to be one of the channels which God Himself uses for the revelation of His own will. But the term, in its religious application, often carries with it the insinuation that prayer, in the sense of conscious fellowship with God, is an illusion, and subjectivity is thus brought into the

citadel of our faith. Those who are busy misunderstanding the New Psychology loudly proclaim to a gullible public that the house of faith which was supposed to be built on solid rock has nothing but shifting sand for a foundation. This libel can be, and has been, frequently exposed, but, in spite of many hard blows, it still possesses unbounded vitality.

There is, however, reason to believe that what keeps most of us from prayer is the fundamental heresy we call materialism. Our practical philosophy is summed up in a creed which Christ rejected : Life depends upon the abundance of the things that a man possesses. We have abandoned the habit of prayer, or perhaps never seriously begun to cultivate it, not simply because we think that ' service ' is of more value or that science has raised some awkward difficulties, but because we do not want to pray. And we do not want to pray because our heart is set elsewhere. Nevertheless, indications are not altogether wanting that, here and there, men are becoming conscious of their need of fellowship with the Unseen. For long we have assumed that the soul did not matter, and that it was bad form to save your own soul even if you had one. We are paying the penalty for our negligence in the confusion and disharmony of our personal and social life. One of the commonest themes of serious novelists, it has been said, is the partial breakdown of life in the 'forties. You can be happy up to a point without God, but, once you realize that you have reached that point, nothing will save you from disaster of one kind or another save fellowship with God. Prayer, however, is not primarily a remedy for a breakdown. It is the secret of that life which is God's purpose for every one. How may we lay hold of its power ?

The chief aim of prayer should be, not the development of our own character or the service of others, but the realization of the presence of God. Hence, if we

are to enter upon the life of prayer, we need to consider the character of Him whose friendship we seek to enjoy. What, then, are the thoughts about God which we should do well to keep constantly in our minds?

1. I would put first the transcendence of God. He is other than we are in the sense that He exists independently of us. God is not simply another name for our ideals or higher self. It is true that we can perceive the activity of His Spirit in every holy thought and lofty aspiration, but our thoughts and aspirations do not exhaust what we mean by God, although He is their personal source. And God is other than we are in the sense that He transcends our conceptions of His nature. 'My thoughts are not your thoughts' —not because they are inscrutable but because they are richer and nobler than anything man has conceived. Nothing so effectively rescues our prayer life and worship from triviality as the constant recollection that God is infinitely rich in Truth, Beauty, and Love.

2. The second thought we need to recall is that God is active. He is transcendent, but He is ever at work in the hearts of men, seeking to translate into human terms that eternal purpose which was revealed in the life and death of Jesus. It is imperative that we should lay hold of the idea that God is active, and that His activity is controlled by a purpose which does not change with the changing years. One cannot help feeling that a dose of Calvinism would prove a valuable tonic to those of us who are allowing our own failure and incompetency to sap the virility of our faith. We remember Calvin, if, indeed, we do, by his errors— that is one of human nature's peculiarities. If we looked a little more carefully into his teaching, we should find that his errors, which were on the grand scale, resulted from an exaggerated emphasis on what were, after all, great truths. A man is

usually right in what he affirms and wrong in what he denies. Calvin denied—and he was wrong—the universality of salvation and the reality of human freedom, but he affirmed—and here he was gloriously right—that God was sovereign Lord, and that the universe was within His control. We need to recover the conviction that the supreme fact is the fact of God, and what ultimately matters is that He who transcends our highest thoughts, and whose constancy does not depend upon ours, is personally active in the world.

3. The activity of God is redemptive, and receives its loftiest expression in the Cross. It has taken men a long time to discern God in the Cross, for does it not suggest His absence rather than His presence? Slowly but surely we are beginning to see that there do we behold as nowhere else the divine glory; and, seeing God in Christ, we realize what He is ever ready to suffer if thereby His gracious purpose may be achieved. And God will not rest until His redemptive design for man is fulfilled. Our difficulty in regard to any task we may undertake is to endure to the end. We are willing to follow after truth and right—up to a point; and then, when the quest leads to dangerous territory, we seek to retire as unobtrusively as possible. We are prepared to love our fellows—up to a point; but ours is so often the love that lets go when it is challenged by the callousness and ingratitude of the human heart. The trouble with most of us is not that there is no good in us, but that there is not enough. The God in whom Jesus bids us believe never gives in and never lets go. He brought man and the world into being of His infinite kindness, and called every man according to His purpose. He will not rest until the human response for which He yearns is willingly and gladly given.

These, then, are some of the thoughts about God which should revitalize the life of prayer. A vision of

God as transcendent, active, redemptive, will lead inevitably to adoration, confession, and intercession—perhaps in some cases to those other forms of prayer which the mystics declare are available for all who will pay the price. Let us, however, confine ourselves for the moment to the three forms which have been mentioned.

1. Adoration, the turning of the mind to God in wonder, love, and praise, is sadly lacking in our worship and prayers, in spite of the fact that it constitutes the very heart of religion. Our prayers move too often within the restricted area of our own thoughts and feelings. There is a real need that we should get away from ourselves, our failures, problems, moods, and direct our minds to one who is other than we are, perfect in holiness, infinite in love, glorious in His redeeming work. Father Kelly, so Dr. Temple tells us, once remarked, 'There used to be a thing called theology, which is Greek for thinking about God. It is very old-fashioned now. Instead of that, there is a thing called the philosophy of religion, which means thinking about your own nice feelings. It is very popular.' The self is too much with us, and our spiritual life is at a low ebb because it lacks the background of a healthy objectivity. 'Think glorious thoughts—of God,' and, once we have seen God, we can do no other.

2. Adoration proceeds by a perfectly natural stage to confession, since no one can contemplate the awful holiness and love of God without being conscious of wrong within. The sense of sin is always awakened by a vision of God. It was after Peter had seen his own heart in the light of the flaming purity of Christ that he begged Christ to depart from him, for the vision was too hard to bear. His consciousness of sin was not engineered, and it is hardly necessary to remark that confession is worthless unless it is sincere. Some of us would find it less difficult to acknowledge that

we are miserable sinners if we realized that most of the sins we commit against God are sins against His children. In sinning against them, we frustrate God's purpose for them and for us. There are also wrongs for which we may have no individual guilt, but for which we are corporately responsible. It has been truly said that slums, sweating, prostitution, war, exist, not because some men are outrageously wicked, but because millions of men are as good as we are and no better. And as we confess our sins, we shall bear on our hearts the sins of others. We are all priests, and one function of a priest is to represent man to God. Our Lord on the cross confessed the sins of the whole world. So grim and heinous did they appear to His unsullied soul that the vision of goodness seemed to fade. Do we know anything of the agony of sin-bearing? It belongs to the life of prayer.

3. Confession, as we have seen, is essentially social in character, and Christian prayer must ever seek to relate itself to the needs of the family, which is all mankind. The power of intercessory prayer is incalculable, provided that those who intercede are in actual union with God, and have themselves a genuine concern about the objects for which they pray. Prayer is the expression of character, and the depth of our religious life is revealed by our intercessory prayers. If we are primarily occupied with worldly ambitions, we shall desire for others such advancement as we ourselves are seeking. On the other hand, if the redemptive purpose of God for every man is our chief care, it will constantly be in our minds when we intercede for our fellow men. Intercessory prayer is a ministry of reconciliation, but it can only prove effective when those who engage in it are dedicated without reserve to the progressive revelation of God in their own life.

Shall we enter into this infinitely rich and spacious world of prayer? In recent years we have spent a

great deal of time discussing the difficulties of prayer. Perhaps the difficulties of prayer, which should be boldly faced, would find their level if we began to explore its possibilities. One is rather tired of hearing what God cannot do. Is there not a glorious opportunity awaiting the Church in these days of moral impotence to reveal, through prayer, the omnipotence of Divine Love? How are we to begin? There are two practical suggestions that may be offered.

Let us first deal with our own personal life. Does prayer mean anything to us? If we ceased to pray, should we be conscious of a sense of loss? Have we taken refuge in the idea that prayer should be free and spontaneous in order to avoid the discipline of method and regularity? Have we begun by assuming that prayer is one of the easiest of spiritual exercises, and given it up when we found it to be the most difficult of all? Have we made the sense of God's nearness in prayer dependent upon a state of feeling rather than upon faith? These are questions which each of us should consider.

Secondly, we need to discover anew the unlimited power of corporate prayer. God may be as near to us when we think, work, or play together as He is when we pray together, but that does not mean that fellowship in thought, work, and play is enough. It is essential that we should cultivate corporate waiting upon God. The idea of divine guidance through the group is being revived in this generation, and its perversions should not be allowed to obscure its prime importance. When a company of people meet together with the sole aim of learning the will of God, is it a thing to be disputed that God will manifest Himself to them, and, through their consecrated personalities, achieve what would otherwise be impossible? Corporate prayer sets God free for action in the world.

The central fact of prayer, we have said, is not ourselves, but God, and it will make all the difference if we think of God as initiating within us the desire to seek His face. Prayer is a response to a love which is prior to ours, for it was waiting for us before we were born. Von Hügel reminds us how St. Bernard constantly stressed this aspect of the divine love : 'He bids his monks rise never so early for their night choir prayer in coldest mid-winter, they will find God awake, Him the awakener ; they will find Him waiting for them, always anticipating even their earliest watches.'

'When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face ; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

HAROLD ROBERTS.

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' When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face ; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

HAROLD ROBERTS.

the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, and monasticism was founded upon that truth, and administered its worldly goods and spiritual gifts, in its best hours, as from that fact and upon that principle. With the Reformation came a re-enforcement of that teaching. It is rather the fashion to-day, especially with those unfriendly to Protestantism, to lay to its neglect of that teaching all the sins of modern Capitalism.

Speaking for England, it is true that by securing civil and religious liberty, freedom of conscience and individual liberty, English Puritanism made an un-Christian individualism possible as never before. But it was not responsible for such a misuse of freedom ; it gave no sanction to any man to ignore his stewardship and his moral responsibility to God for all he had or did or acquired. By their emphasis upon the value and stewardship of time, and upon the duty of work, and by their diligence and trustworthiness, the Puritans prospered in worldly goods themselves, and laid the foundations of industry, trade, and commerce. They made possible its enterprise and development. They provided the capital for it, but they were not morally responsible for unconscientious capitalism. Oliver Cromwell says true Puritans ' made a conscience of what they did,' and Milton says they lived ever as in their great Task-Master's eye.

They branded all careless consumption as a sin, and their conception of stewardship and condemnation of worldly living contributed greatly to the morale of capitalism. However readily the idea of stewardship may have degenerated into cant later on, the Puritans undoubtedly persuaded many to take their stewardship seriously, and ' even the keeping of accounts became a religious duty,' not, as later, a mere wise and necessary business precaution.

The Evangelical Revival followed on in the next century as another great Christian movement. It

revived all that was most spiritual in Puritanism, and quickened men's experience of inward religion.

In preparing this address I am asked to bear in mind that a friendly critic has stated 'that the Evangelical Revival had no ethical originality; that its moral aims and achievements proved to be seriously defective.' Time will not permit, therefore, to speak of proportionate giving, and many of the more familiar aspects of stewardship. *The Christian Use of Money*, edited by Dr. Lofthouse, can be referred to, and will be found very informing and helpful.

As to ethical originality, the leaders of that Revival never wished to be original—they saw no need for it. The need they realized was to remedy the neglect of the ethics of the New Testament, ethics which they deemed all sufficient—the ethics of love, the ethics of their Lord and Master whose stewards they were. To remedy this neglect they proclaimed 'free grace and dying love' for all men, and restated those ethics.

It is mere history that they brought this divine remedy to bear upon multitudes of people in the eighteenth century, and thereby averted here a violent revolution like that upon the Continent. Nor can it be admitted that 'its moral aims and achievements proved to be seriously defective.' On the contrary, it raised up a host of practising Christians whose strictness of life was proverbial and whose example leavened society. They recognized that the ethical standards of Christ not only required prudence and goodwill, but also sacrifice.

Dr. Wellman J. Warner has recently published a study of *The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution*. The study brings out the remarkably ethical nature of the Evangelical Revival. It has impressed Mr. J. A. Hobson, an authoritative sociologist, who says in reviewing it, 'Wesleyanism was a distinctly social religion,' and that its leaders 'found themselves

occupied in providing a serviceable ethic for the new Industrialism.'

This was not probably their conscious aim, but it is undeniable that they did provide such an ethic, and it was no fault of theirs if the Methodists of a later period failed to apply those principles, and gradually conformed to the prevailing practices which disfigured the rise of the new machine—industry.

Dr. Warner quotes Wesley's fine saying that the gospel of Christ knows no religion but social, and of no Holiness but social holiness, and he affirms that 'the Revival under Wesley was more of an ethical than a theological movement,' and 'Nothing,' he says, 'is more central to the Wesleyan Revival than its insistence upon a socialized will.' Its view was that 'all economic questions are moral problems.'

Upon few ethical duties was Wesley more plain and insistent than upon that of stewardship. Dr. Warner's summary of his teachings is 'that human life can be defined only as a trust for the execution of a moral purpose.' Hear John Wesley to a man of property: 'You are not the proprietor of anything; no, not one shilling in the world. You are only a steward of what another entrusts you with.' Those who use property in any form, whether in money or energy, for any other purpose than those dictated by the Christian ethic are not only robbing God continually by embezzling and wasting their Lord's goods, but also violating the rights of the community. It is but like keeping money from the poor to buy poison for ourselves. He declares that 'we are stewards of the manifold gifts of God; of our substance, our souls, our bodies, our faculties, our talents, and even of the very grace of God.' Excellent teaching for the field and market-place to-day, and Wesley's sermons on 'The Use of Money,' 'The Good Steward,' 'The Danger of Riches,' 'Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity,' and the 'Danger of

Increasing Riches,' might be read again with profit.

It was the Evangelical Revival, and the reasoned demands of the Methodists with reference to the use of their possessions, which renewed the Puritan sense of stewardship and made the Methodist Movement a mighty social force, as competent foreign historians are now realizing.

The exhortation of Wesley to 'get all we can' to 'save all we can' is but the preliminary to the exhortation to 'give all we can,' and the rules and safeguards relating to these must be taken together with the exhortations. He foretold that the virtues which the Revival engendered naturally brought a material reward. The inference is that the two first exhortations are dangerous unless the safeguards relating to the three are observed, and in his seventy-eighth year he mourns that not more than 500 out of 50,000 keep the rules.

This created a new problem, and much modern scorn has been expressed for Smiles' *Self Help*, and William Arthur's *Successful Merchant*. The types of 'self-made' men they set forth were doubtless limited in their outlook and hard in their ethic; but, where they were good Methodists, many of them made a conscience of what they did, up to their light and understanding, and their gifts and endowments were often munificent and their private and personal charity was large and constant; and to-day there are many evidences among the Methodists that the sense of stewardship remains alive, but in cases where men devoted themselves wholly to the accumulation of wealth there was invariably a loss of the true sense of stewardship, and the rich, not being content with what plain nature required, began to divert to their own luxury in many ostentatious ways what would serve to supply the necessities of the community, and to that extent they were and are responsible for the public distress which recurrently afflicts the nation. They

were probably unconscious of Wesley's teaching and what financial experts now affirm—'that every purchase of an article of luxury stiffens the price of articles of necessity and makes the struggles of the poor harder.'

A conscience on many economic matters had yet to be developed. It is, however, beginning to be seen that the good things of life were, and are, imperfectly distributed, and that social justice in acquisition and administration has been forgotten or unrealized.

In judging of this situation allowances must be made for the fact that the industrial machine which all types of men had to work was a competitive one, and naturally produced the extremes of riches and poverty so well known. The deserts of the poor it was said would be adjusted 'in the final proportions of Eternal Justice' 'up above.' This led to a demand that stewards of the old machine should renovate it, or provide a new one which would work more justly 'here below.'

Now, although it may be said that the Methodists are among the most generous and public-spirited people in the community, it must be admitted that stewardship is not generally regnant even within the Christian Church. The weak point has been that we have forgotten that personality is social and that the individual has no meaning apart from the community of which he is a member. Stewardship must have relation to society as well as to God.

Wesley said 'that common objection' they are poor only because they are idle 'is wickedly and devilishly false.' For instance, the Methodist local preachers have been amongst the most industrious, thrifty, intelligent, and God-fearing men in the world, and yet there are hundreds in poverty. The Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association, therefore, stands as the greatest indictment of the industrial machine, and this admirable institution of stewards, in picking up the victims

from the wheel of oppression, might extend its stewardship with advantage to the wheel itself.

Certain great principles and methods of the early Methodists relating to employment, service, remuneration, and distress, of which we were stewards, have been neglected and almost forgotten. When the Methodist Church calls a man to the Christian ministry, or, if I may put it so, to the distribution of religion, in effect it demands from each minister a service according to his ability, and in return the remuneration is supposed to be according to need. Genius is required to assert its legitimate empire, not by the amount of tribute it will levy, but by the greatness of the service it will render. If his needs are for himself and his wife, his stipend is accordingly. If he has seven children, he receives seven times as much for them as the minister who has only one child, and often the less gifted receives more than his brilliant brother. Excellent ethics—but, having been kept as a special preserve and secret, were almost dead and unknown, and when, a few years ago, it was suggested that justice should be expressed in this way among those who distribute material things, many Methodists expressed their surprise. The ethics and economics of these principles are brilliantly expounded in *The Disinherited Family* and the Beckly Lecture for 1927 by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.A., M.P.

The Methodist method of preventing unemployment for generations has been to control the work to be done and the workers to do it, and to arrange for the work to go around, including the upper and the lower tens. That is why no one has ever heard of a Methodist minister being out of work. Wesley summed up the solution of poverty and distress in quite appropriate language for his day and ours. He said, with certain comments, ' Let every one avoid luxuries,' ' Let every one work, and provide employment to go around to

all.' Excellent methods and aims, the stewardship of which needs reviving.

A new conscience of stewardship has been developed of late years, and the modern difficulty about taxation and rating is becoming less serious because of the growth of a sense of responsibility to society. The privileged and prosperous realize more than ever that they acquire their wealth through the existence of the community, and that they are not absolute owners, but stewards, of the goods and advantages entrusted to them. This is true also in a real degree of mental and spiritual possessions. Had this conscience developed earlier, social evils now too readily charged to Protestantism and Puritanism would never have arisen.

Walther Rathenau, the great industrialist of Germany, in his book *In Days to Come*, says that man will recognize the fact that beyond what is necessary for the ordinary amenities of civilized life the State is fully entitled to relieve him of any or all of his surplus. Ownership will not be arbitrary, but responsible. A new morality and a new responsibility must spiritualize even the most material desires of humanity, and lead to a life lived, not for the sake of happiness and power, but for the sake of justice and God. Significant words for a twentieth-century millionaire.

Of course, the converse must also be realized—that the doctrine of stewardship extends to society itself. Society does realize and accept to a degree its corporate responsibility to its members. This alarms the short-sighted and callous, but it is an implicit recognition that we are members one of another. Society understands that it is entrusted with a talent of stewardship ; of ' that one talent which is death to hide,' for where there is no humane vision the whole people perish.

It is said that society taking over so many functions in the matter of the poor, the aged, the young, the sick, and the unemployed in discharge of its social stewardship,

has relieved the individual of his personal stewardship and perhaps weakened his sense of it. There is no necessity for this. Individual stewardship only changes its form when merged into a wider and more efficient stewardship. The individual has now the new task, a part of his own stewardship—to support, further, and help develop the stewardship of society. It is his duty to keep the steward function of the community alive, alert, and adequate. His new function is to become a steward of the public conscience, assisting, supporting, stimulating, and regulating it. He must help to impress the Government and the State with the fact that it, too, is not a master any more than he, the individual, is, but a servant, and may be brought to account in decisive and constitutional ways.

It still remains true, however, that ' the first definite task of stewardship is the perfecting of our own function of life.' Good stewardship is an important matter. Good stewards are equally so, and they are inter-related requirements in expressing the Christian ethic and aim. If we are to be good stewards, needing not to be ashamed, we must fit ourselves for the relationships of life to which I have referred. What ' God spends upon us of sunshine, rain, bread, grace, and truth,' must be husbanded into strength of hand, brain, and heart, and generously given in useful service, and then we shall find that practice—yes, practice—will make for a more perfect sense of stewardship.

With most of us it will be desirable to remember that the doctrine of stewardship implies an audit, that the Auditor is always present, and that the audit is always going on ; and our desire may well be expressed in the hymn sung much by the early Methodists :

> Arm me with jealous care,
> As in Thy sight to live,
> And oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
> A strict account to give.

J. H. Beckly.

DIRECTED SILENCE :

LET US CONSIDER :

Whether we have seen life—and seen it whole—as a sacred calling ; in all things great and small, glorified and sanctified by our Lord's sharing of its trivial routine and its most common ways ?

Do we waste our time through lack of studied care to gather up its fragments ? Do we spend too much time in amusements and unprofitable talk and reading ?

When we work, do we work with less than our best powers of mind or body ? Are we so busy and absorbed in our own affairs that we find too little time to share ourselves and our gifts with the old, the lonely, the dispossessed, and the helpless ?

Do we care too much for money and for the things that only money can buy ? Is our use of money related to our discipleship of Jesus ? Does our way of life, whilst securing our modest comfort and well-being, fail to testify to others that we are here, not to be ministered unto, but to minister ? Does our material environment and the disposition of our means tend to repel those who are poorer than ourselves ? Are we so harassed and burdened by difficulties and differences of circumstance that we are sorely let and hindered in walking as children of God ?

HYMN : *Tune :* ' Byzantium.'

Let Him to whom we now belong
His sovereign right assert,
And take up every thankful song
And every loving heart.

He justly claims us for His own,
Who bought us with a price ;
The Christian lives to Christ alone,
To Christ alone he dies.

Jesus, Thine own at last receive,
Fulfil our hearts' desire,
And let us to Thy glory live
And in Thy cause expire.

Our souls and bodies we resign ;
With joy we render Thee
Our all, no longer ours, but Thine
To all eternity.

BENEDICTION :

The Lord bless you and keep you ; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you ; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

VIII

THE VOCATION OF A CHRISTIAN

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Some attractive and effective form of fellowship is obviously imperative if the personal relations through which evangelical religion achieves its end are to be fulfilled. It must in the truest sense be social. From the beginning the necessity and privilege of Christian fellowship have been the burthen of the Methodist Message. It grew out of Wesley's own dictum, 'You cannot go to heaven alone.' Forms of fellowship may possibly vary in the reunited Methodism of the future, as ideas of churchmanship have varied in the past. It is pertinent, therefore, to consider the constituents and compulsions that may mingle in an ideal of churchmanship that can inspire the Methodist brotherhood and bind it together in the bond of perfectness which is love. The 'Church' is clearly a term in need of careful definition. For this we must patiently and reverently seek, exercising in all things common loyalties to the great Head of the Church whose abiding presence is the hope of her unity and the strength of her witness.

The integrity of both the Church's unity and witness demands that from her organized fellowship there should proceed the constructive forces, working amidst the bewildering conditions of the existing social order, towards the creation of a new type of citizenship. The dynamic necessary for this social reconstruction must be more ethical than economic; and spiritual rather than political in the springs from which its energies are fed and directed. Loyalty to conscience, love of truth, passion for righteousness, unflinching devotion to duty, consecration to the highest ends which every true reformer covets for his followers, are terms of Christian citizenship for which the Methodist Message to-day ought to sound a trumpet-call. In order that this type of citizenship may become dominant and determining in the social order it seems to many keen observers that the Methodist Message must preach a New Puritanism. By this is meant not an unseeing or unsympathetic censorship of prevailing manners and morals. It means, rather, the christianizing of a Christian man's entire attitude towards privileges, pleasures, pursuits which may be lawful for him, but which for Christ's sake and for the coming of His Kingdom a follower of Jesus will consent to renounce.

SILENT PRAYER.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Cross of Jesus.'

Jesus calls us : o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, Christian, follow Me,—

As, of old, apostles heard it
By the Galilæan lake,
Turned from home, and toil, and kindred,
Leaving all for His dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, Christian, love Me more!

In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still He calls, in cares and pleasures,
That we love Him more than these.

Jesus calls us : by Thy mercies,
Saviour, make us hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thine obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all.

IN THIS last session of the Congress, let us together renew the sense of our vocation in Christ Jesus, reminding ourselves again :

That we are not our own ; we are bought with a price ; that we do not choose Christ, but He chooses us, and ordains us to bear fruit ;

That we are not to be shaped to the pattern of this world, but transformed for the service of the world, by the renewing of our minds, so that we may prove what is that good and beautiful and perfect Will of God ;

That for such a life as this, all things are ready, all things are given, all things are ours, the love of God, the grace of Christ, the fellowship and succour of the Spirit, all are ours, as we are Christ's.

LET US PRAY :

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Christ our Lord.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Stanley.'

O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free ;
Thy secret tell ; help me to bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care ;
Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear winning word of love ;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me Thy patience ; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong,
In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way,
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live!

I

A NEW CHURCHMANSHIP

Most of us would confess to a sense of irritation when we are told we live in an age of transition. It has been said so often, the repetition has become annoying, and the implication, hateful to all earnest souls, is that it is of no use to try to do anything, because the tide of change sweeps all before it and there is nothing we can do but submit to it and wait until things have run their course. But, no matter how we take it, things are changing as regards religion, and changing with great rapidity. A process of disintegration is going on around us and in us.

The people to whom Moody preached had a theology at the back of their minds ; the majority of those to whom we preach have no such mental background. The system of holding two diets of worship on a Sunday, both of them alike, is breaking down in our hands. Very few people attend both. We no longer insist on attendance at both. Free-will offertory schemes are adopted largely because Church members attend worship irregularly. In some churches pews are let for only one service on Sundays. Church prayer-meetings grow smaller in numbers, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is becoming more and more the centre of Methodist Church life and devotion. The majority of those who become members to-day do so after a course of instruction. If, at the end of the course, they give a fair degree of mental assent to what they have heard, they are received. St. Paul said : ' Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' With us, ' begotten you,' and ' instructed you,' have come to

mean pretty much the same thing. Wave after wave of secularism flows over our English Sunday. Some of these waves are broken, but the tide rises higher, the defences crumble, and it sometimes seems as if Sunday as a religious institution were doomed.

I am not attempting an analysis of the present religious situation, or even an orderly and detailed statement of it ; all I am doing is to show you, by such examples as might occur to any one, that we live in a time marked by rapid change, and that therefore our Churchmanship cannot remain as it is if we are to meet the demands of our day or even see them clearly. The Red Queen and Alice had to run very fast to remain in the place where they were. We are many of us putting out a tremendous amount of energy to maintain the present position of organized Christianity, and yet we find we are not succeeding. No thoughtful man can believe the Church can remain as it is. Everywhere a sense of dissatisfaction is felt, and the most devoted are the most concerned. There are few defenders of the *status quo* to-day.

The good men who have arranged this Congress are persuaded we need a new Churchmanship and they have asked me to speak on it. I am not sure I like the phrase. When Irving went to London he wrote to Carlyle, ' I go to demonstrate a higher style of Christianity.' I am positive we need to set out to do that and in that sense I echo the call for a new Churchmanship. But if it is simply a matter of order or orders, a question of organization and ecclesiastical arrangement and discipline, I am not much interested, for I do not think we are going to serve our generation in that way.

What is the Church ? It is a company of redeemed people who are gathered around Christ in living fellowship with Him, and, through Him, with each other. The Church is not one aspect of a nation's existence. We are not churchmen because we are

Englishmen. The Church is not simply a department of the nation's work, a corporation of ecclesiastics who are appointed as its servants to look after the Godward side of things. The State has no power to constitute the Church. This is generally acknowledged to-day. The Church of England Ennabling Act was passed because it was only too evident that it was possible to be an Englishman and a pagan.

But, when we have dismissed this, there are still two ideas of the Church which confront each other in various guises in the world to-day. The first is that the clergy are the Church, existing, not for its well-being, but constituting its very being. Where the bishop is, and the orders that flow from his sacred hands, there is the Church and nowhere else. No company of people, no matter how deeply they love Jesus and how fervently they believe in Him, can, according to this idea, be a Church of Christ unless they have ruling them and dispensing to them the sacraments a member of an ecclesiastical corporation whose authority and power derive from a bishop. The second idea is that the Church consists of faithful people who are drawn to Christ, and are in living fellowship with him, no matter what their corporate organization may be ; and that, therefore, church polity and order are secondary matters, and faith, in the sense of personal trust in Christ, is far more important ; and, further, that any local church may organize itself in the way that will best enable it to do its work, for no form of church polity is divine.

These two ideas of the Church cannot be fused or merged in one formula. They must contend with one another until one or the other conquers. We who are gathered here hold to the second, and it determines the character and quality of our Churchmanship. There is nothing to be gained, but much to be lost, by well-meant attempts to lead us to imitate methods and

forms which for ages have been characteristic of those who rest on the idea of historical apostolical succession. We do not mean what they mean, and therefore it is absurd for us to ape their manners and wear their clothes. 'It is all very well,' said a Presbyterian to me, 'for a bishop to wear a mitre; he has an ecclesiastical background which warrants his having some sort of crown. But if you or I wore one, it would be like a charade.' Let us be true to ourselves and avoid what, after all, is an impossible synthesis. As long as episcopal ordination means what it really does mean, I don't want it. Mine is a real ministry. It began many years ago, and I say with Howe, 'It offends my intellect to suppose a thing can have two beginnings.'

I say this because I want to make it clear that the new Churchmanship I have in mind is not a matter of new clothes or new service books. The men who think they can renew the soul of Methodism by introducing liturgical services into our public worship only show their own shallowness of mind; they are only a little nobler and a little wiser than those who think they can revive the body of Christ by a programme of week-night amusements.

If what I have been setting forth is the reality of the Church, since it is its reality, we can pass on now to see what Churchmanship really is. Its vital centre is the relationship of the believing man to his Lord. We do not belong to Christ because we belong to the Church, but we belong to the Church because we belong to Christ. Faith in Him in the sense of surrender to Him is the heart of the whole matter. A living Church cannot be built out of men who possess only a second-hand religion, a religion of hearsay and outward imitation and submission. An old-time prophet, looking forward to the New Covenant, said that one of its marks was that no man should need to say to his brother, 'Know ye the Lord,' for all should know

Him. In the Church of Christ every man is called to repent for himself, to believe for himself, and to make his own response to God. No matter whether it be new Churchmanship or old, first of all is the Lord and the believing man. Some say, 'No bishop, no Church'; I say, 'No believing man, no Church.' Christ cannot build His Church until we put ourselves into His hands to break or use.

But faith is never a solitary thing. It reaches out to find fellowship for its own support and increase. It begins as the act of a soul, but it goes on to become the interaction of a society whose vital centre is the Lord. The New Testament knows nothing of a solitary religion. To go with Jesus is to go with the disciples of Jesus. You may not like all His disciples, but He calls you to learn the art of living and working with other men and to endure the discipline of a society. So faith constitutes a society, and rises to fullness and vigour in it. Here, then, you come to that second great note of Churchmanship—it is the sharing of the life of a society whose formative centre is Christ. I say 'a society,' not merely a congregation; for while a congregation may be but a gathering of people to wait on the ministry of a preacher, or of a rota of preachers, the mark of a society is that every member makes some contribution to the support and well-being of the whole. 'When ye come together,' says St. Paul, 'every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.'

John Wesley surely had in mind that apostolic pattern as he went up and down this land forming societies for the cultivation of personal holiness. Gathering what was vital from the past, he, as a forward-looking man, prepared for the future. And in this new day, when we are reconstituting Methodism, we shall do well to regard Methodist Churches as societies and

not as congregations. The new Churchmanship will not be merely attendance on a preacher ; it will be a share in a corporate body which realizes the living presence of Christ, which is devoted to the cultivation of holy life ; a body in which persons find recognition, respect, and affection, where they are valued not for what they can do or give but for what they are ; a body which, empowered and endued by Christ, moves out to act on the world in a saving ministry.

The two most important things about this Christian society will be, first, its Intention, and, secondly, its Mission. Wesley, with the insight of a spirit-guided man, stressed both. He declared what we must declare, that the intention of a Methodist society is the cultivation of holiness. We need to define this. What is the Church for ? Why do we gather week by week ? What is it we are seeking ? We are surely not content with the mere maintenance of an organization. It is a desirable thing that we should pay our way, keep the roof in repair, warm the building, raise the circuit dues. But beyond all these necessary things is the spiritual purpose of our association. And what is that ? It is that we may become like our Master, that daily we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dare we propose anything less as the purpose of a Christian society ?

I know when I use the word holiness I am likely to be misunderstood. Some of you will at once class me with the cranks. I am not distressed. The Church is weak to-day because there is so little of the passionate search for holiness in it. We can live and prosper without fine buildings, eloquent preachers, without endowments, without grand organs, without circuit stewards, superintendents, and presidents, but we cannot live without an unquenchable desire for the love of God. We have no right to let this vital matter become simply the hunting-ground of eccentrics.

Christianity must mean the hallowing of life, and it means for me the hallowing of *my* life, and for you the hallowing of yours. We cannot shake off this demand by saying we make no claim to be perfect, for a holy man is not a perfect man, but a man who has been laid hold of and moulded by the perfect thing, and who can therefore be satisfied by nothing less than the image of Christ. Art is dedicated to perfection, and religion cannot be served with less devotion than art. Not long ago, when I had said something like this, I was criticized because I had not emphasized the social duty of Christian men. Perhaps some of you expected that a paper on the new Churchmanship would be largely devoted to the social and economic programme which we ought to advocate. We are told we ought to forget the call to holiness of life and go out to help the world, that this interest in the soul is unhealthy, and, indeed, morbid. Nobody would say that the Church to-day was given over to pietism. We have long since given up thinking much about our souls. The most admired man in Protestant circles is he who is up and doing for himself and his neighbour. And yet from all sides we are told how little the Church is doing to help the world, how weak it is, how ineffective is its service. Why are we weak? Not because we are not busy, but because we are not holy. The truth is, we are not sufficiently great in soul to make a mighty impact on the world. The world cannot be moved by a busy Church, but only by a holy Church. Wicked men do not fear a rich Church, or a big Church, or a clever Church, or an orthodox Church, but they fear a holy Church. We may talk as we will about service, but our service is personal service, and can never be of better quality than the persons who render it. The greatest and most immediate help the Methodist Church could give the world to-day would be to produce in the next ten years a large body of men and

women wholly consecrated to God. You may call me a pietist, but I wish there were more honest, simple piety. The truth is, there are not enough Christians, and the first business of the Church is to make them. The antithesis many people make between evangelical Christianity and social service is false. No body of men has ever helped England and the world better than Moody's converts. If you want a sample of them, look at Sir Wilfred Grenfell. The basal weakness of the Church to-day is that it is not cultivating the type of life which alone can shame evil and show forth the beauty of God. The only thing that can ever make a Church more lively, and, indeed, more interesting, is religion. The deepest scorn the world can feel is reserved for a worldly Church. Our talk of a new and nobler social order is vain until we can point to the hewn stones for the building of the temple. We are not shaping them. All up and down this land are men and women whose names are on Church rolls ; pleasant-mannered people, kindly people, but full of quiet worldliness ; and sometimes these folk drive me nearer to despair than do the publicans and sinners.

So far the intention of the society ; now a word in closing on its mission. We bear the name of One who came to seek that which was lost, and we can only be worthy of that name if we aid Him in that work. The Church which exists only to cultivate holiness sinks into a stuffy pietism. The Church which attempts to go out to the world without the lustre of holiness in its heart must be ineffective and feeble. The right intention leads on to the true mission. A living Church does not live for itself, but for the realization of its Master's purpose in the world.

Only three times in the last century has Methodism dared to forget itself and go out to save men. The first time was in the Primitive Methodist Revival ; the second time was in the founding of the Salvation Army ;

and the third time was in the Forward Movement led by Hugh Price Hughes. To-day the cry is raised, 'Evangelize—or Perish,' but the evangelism which is only carried on to save our ecclesiastical organizations will have little heart in it. We can only go out and save when we love Jesus and the men for whom He died.

The purpose of the Church is to make the forgiveness of God real to men. It is not enough to talk about forgiveness; we have to mediate it. The power to remit sins is in every living Church. We deal with realities. We can loose the bonds that hold men to evil; we can lay on them the bonds that shall for ever bind them to good. 'Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained.' The only Churchmanship worth having is a share in this priestly work of delivering men from their sins.

R. H. B. Shapland.

LET US THANK GOD :

For the gift of His Spirit to enlighten, guide, and strengthen His people ;

For our place and fellowship in the Church in worship ;

For the heritage from our fathers that is ours to-day, and for the call to be fellow-workers with Christ ;

For the work of His Spirit manifest among us, and for the growing desire for unity within our Methodist fellowship.

LET US PRAY :

That God will remove far from us all hard memories, prejudices, and narrowness of mind.

That Christ's Church may be given a new vision, a new charity, new wisdom, and new understanding.

That she may strive, not for her own safety, but for the world's salvation.

That God will give such power to His Church that she may have the life which is Life indeed, and share it most abundantly.

That the Church may be guided towards a new application of the Christian spirit to daily life.

That if our preaching is without power, our teaching without edification, our conversation without savour, if our friendships do not result in the furtherance of the Gospel, if our lives do not rebuke sin, it may please God to restore to us the might and gentleness and beauty of His Holy Spirit.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'Holly.'

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone ;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet ;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

O strengthen me, that, while I stand
Firm on the rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart ;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O give Thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from Thee,
To weary ones in needful hour.

O fill me with Thy fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where,
Until Thy blessèd face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

II

A NEW CITIZENSHIP

This essay attempts to honour the terms of the Methodist Congress Committee, viz. ' to expound the obligations involved in evangelical experience to serve the common weal with sacrificial devotion.' It is quite impossible to compress, even in outline, all that must be attempted, and will be encountered, in a serious endeavour to fulfil the evangelical experience in the terms of a New Citizenship. The chief difficulty is a practical one. Experience as a subject of private contemplation and culture is very much in our own keeping ; but the moment that we insist upon its application to social and civic affairs we may violently collide with the opposing ideas and claims of other people. The set, the trend, and tradition of society may stubbornly refuse our innovations. Their resistance may modify and even nullify our efforts. Are we at liberty to compromise, or abate our demands ? Must we honour the loyalty to quality which is the hall-mark of fidelity ? If we do honour it, quite evidently there will be opportunity for sacrificial devotion.

The Evangelical in this affair of citizenship has some external disadvantages from which the Roman Catholic does not suffer. The Roman Catholic Church, because of its ancient claim to superiority over secular things and control of civic behaviour, relieves its members of individual responsibility. Its ideal is a Church State, with the Church as corporate civic head. Whatever criticism we may offer to such an arbitrary and depersonalized mode of citizenship only emphasizes the task and responsibility of the Evangelical. In fact, this is its acid-test. Does it hold sufficient inherent energy and honour that it must express itself in constructive

social service? Does it fully recognize that the birth of a social consciousness, and a social conscience, is the most characteristic development of the present generation? Is it capable of thinking in the terms of humanity, and of promoting in every way a comprehensive human welfare? Has Evangelical experience the mobility and resource to do this?

Citizenship compels us to find out just what it is that Evangelical experience implies. It must be radical and transforming, and therefore beget an original and a valorous vision concerning society. If the Spirit of Christ touches life anywhere, then it touches it everywhere, and in a sovereign and controlling way. It has an imperial right to put its values into circulation. A new citizenship is not an accommodation, nor an expediency, but the natural and inevitable expression of Evangelical experience. Redeeming grace cannot be hoarded as a perquisite. The wine of the Spirit must be poured forth sacramentally. It seeks not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give its life.

The Protestant Reformation was the affirmation of a man's right to think and decide in the matter of his spiritual destiny. It dismissed the huckstering of pardons and gloried in the forgiveness of sins. Unfortunately, the Reformation remains incomplete. It never defined and made obligatory the principle of citizenship in the same way that it emphasized ecclesiastical revolt. The leaders were more concerned about the correct administration of the sacraments than about the clean administration of the concerns of daily life. It left important parts of life only remotely touched. The sacred and the secular were regarded as separate. Our problem arises from the fact that they can no longer be kept apart. At the best it was but accommodation to circumstance and now it is seen to be false and dangerous. The task of evangelical citizenship is to secure the doing of the will of God on earth

as in heaven. 'The modern world has developed a civilization of a secular kind and incorporated it firmly in the modern State. Thus the Church finds itself faced by a grave dilemma. There ceases to be any distinctively Christian sphere of life, and the secular view and treatment of things threatens entirely to supersede the religious dispensation.' As the late J. Brierley says, 'The whole problem of how men shall live together, of how they shall share among them the goods of life, is up for rehearing, and no teaching institution, by whatever venerable name it may call itself, will be listened to unless in these matters it can give a sane and courageous leadership.'

To what degree is evangelical experience willing and capable of giving that sane and courageous leadership? How far will the collective aim of the Church encourage and support it? This new citizenship must be intensive as well as extensive. It must apply spiritual principles in such a fearless way that they create wholesome conditions and promote personal well-being. It will concern itself primarily, not with rival policies and theories, but will insist that spiritual principles shall be honoured and obeyed. It is not enough to pass resolutions of protest about social wrongs; we must demonstrate and fearlessly enforce a new way of life. 'The world has to choose henceforward between moving uphill on Jesus' pathway, and by His guidance, and slipping down into ruin. Not that the world ever had any other choice, but to-day a man must shut his eyes tight not to perceive the starkly plain alternatives.' Human society must become a spiritual organism, and a vital unity. The notion that one man, one class, or one nation can enrich themselves at the expense of another is a false and treacherous illusion. We are members one of another, for weal or woe. This is generally admitted, but is far from being the governing principle of daily life. There can be no

Christian society until it becomes an informing conscience. Evangelical experience must express itself as social Christianity.

Our Leader and Guide must be Jesus in His vision and action concerning the Kingdom of God. He never made the distinctions that we make between the physical and the spiritual, time and eternity. There were degrees of value, but ultimately life was, to Him, a profound unity. The idea that the earth is a waste howling wilderness, and man's life a kind of penal servitude, is Greek, not Galilean, and can no longer be admitted. One of the suggestive and encouraging signs of the times is the fresh and growing interest in the meaning of the Kingdom. The old idea of a Messianic reign from Jerusalem quickly passed away. The identification of the Kingdom and Church has had a much longer history. The postponement of the Kingdom to a posthumous heaven still holds sway in many minds. These are not to be dismissed as of no value. Each expressed an aspect of truth, but now we must go beyond them. Kingdom is more universal than Church. The Church is the means, the Kingdom is the end. The Kingdom of God is the great and comprehensive ideal of the Christian life. It is the realization under the conditions of space and time of the eternal purpose of God. It includes the life and destiny of man, and unites God and man in a solidarity of life. It must therefore include the whole life of man, spiritual, moral, mental, and physical. Life is sacred, and the Kingdom fulfils itself in the personal, family, social, political, and industrial relations of life. The Kingdom of God may mean much more than a human society on earth, but it can never mean less. The standard and test of Christian citizenship is the Kingdom of God.

Immediately that we attempt to honour the Kingdom ideal we shall violently clash against the class

interest of politics, the self-interest of economics, and the horde of vested interests that batten on the moral and physical degeneration of the community. But we have got to do it. A new citizenship will, in God's name, declare war. It will mean a revolution. Not a revolution of strife, but of radical regeneration and transformation. Revolution or dissolution are the sharp alternatives urging a speedy decision. Nothing less radical than revolution, no code of reforms or schemes of reconstruction, can achieve deliverance. We need a fundamental change in the spirit of society to lift it out of the bog of selfish fears and greedy cunning, the morass of reckless indulgence, on to the sure foundations of right and truth, equity and honour. We must endow it with a lofty motive and a human purpose. Evangelical citizenship must do it or it will not be done. Nothing but the essence of the Christian gospel can perform this. Politicians and reformers may announce their plans and cures. These will all come to naught unless a spiritual pressure proceeding out of the heart of Christians compels their realization. The vision of a new humanity ministering to each other's welfare was the glowing purpose in the soul of Jesus, and it moved Him forward to fulfil His Father's will. His aim was a society, not a coterie, a communal and a social ideal ; not a secluded spiritual culture, but a public practice, realizing and fulfilling the spiritual meanings of life.

Evangelical experience has been criticized as being too other-worldly and individualistic. Sometimes the criticism has been deserved. Some historical perspective would, however, seriously modify the charge. The bringing of the prospect of a spiritual Canaan within the outlook and hope of the peasants of eighteenth-century England by the leaders of the Evangelical Revival had an immense social, domestic, and civic value. Nevertheless, the cry ' No politics and no

socialism in the pulpit' has become an excuse for the evasion of responsibility. The problem is not a simple one, and speech and agitation will not do much. The outlook must be redirected and enlarged. We must face the physical and domestic conditions of life. We are confronted by the problem of *Poverty*, with its galling insecurity, its numerous causes, and its decadent results. The first principle of Christianity makes personality, not property, the foundation of human society. The greatness of a nation consists not in the magnitude of its dominions, nor in the amount of its wealth, but in the clean, healthy, and fraternal spirit of its members. Autocracy and oppression cannot live with Christianity, and democracy cannot live without it. The first great problem evangelical citizenship must deal with is the problem of poverty. It is not a problem of economics or inequality, but the degradation of men and women. Poverty stunts and represses; it blights the unspeakable possibilities of the human spirit.

Our human life on this planet, here and now, is the direct concern of God. To deny or evade this is the most blatant atheism. True, that man cannot live by bread alone, but he cannot live without it. If he is to live he must be able to get a living. Whether he can get it, what it costs to get it, is not merely an economic question, it is a spiritual concern, because it pierces down to the throbbing nerve of the soul. The right to live, the opportunity and responsibility to live, are fundamental in the teaching of Jesus, and Evangelical experience must secure them. The concern of God with human welfare is here and now. He is kind and considerate, patient and providential. His good gifts are large and liberal, constant and impartial. What are described as physical needs He is concerned about. He provides for them, and He requires equitable distribution. Jesus assures us that

those who filch and hoard for themselves, and leave others in poverty, dirt, and rags, are laying up for themselves a terrible judgement. The last judgements rest upon evidence from the daily round and the handling of physical resources. Condemnation swift and sure overtakes the pagans who make eating, drinking, and clothing the chief aim in life. Dives, remembering his neglect of Lazarus, found the remembrance a red and flaming hell. He remembered that he had forgotten. There is a physical imperative in Christian citizenship. If faith does not function in the marketplace, it cannot be effectual in the place of worship. If we are not Christian about the things within our power we disqualify ourselves in every way. We must moralize our social practices, ethicize our politics, and make communal service the standard of business behaviour.

The problem of a livelihood is more than that of money and bread ; it is one of life. The foundation of a Christian nation is a pure and wholesome family life. The family is the cradle of civilization. It is the primary group of society. A home is not a building ; it is a spirit, a vestal temple of love and peace. A house is the framework of a possible home. What chance is there for home life to large multitudes ? The hearthstone may be the foundation-stone of the State, and it must be the altar-stone. The rapid transition from rural and rustic to town and city created the housing problem, though it is by no means unknown in the villages. The critical problem of social welfare begins there. It is the legacy of a generation that could mix prayer and plunder without any sense of moral contradiction and get rich quickly at the cost of physical and moral deterioration of the people. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond say of the ' Town Labourer ' : ' Perhaps the best way to describe the new towns and their form of government would be to say that, so far from

breaking or checking the power of circumstances over men's lives, they symbolized the absolute dependence and helplessness of the mass of the people living in them. They were not so much towns as barracks ; not the refuge of a civilization but the barracks of an industry. . . . They represented nothing but the avarice of the jerry-builder, catering for the avarice of the capitalist.' The consequences are incalculable and infernal. Large multitudes of people huddled together in small areas. Slums where children have not as much chance to live as rabbits in a warren. If there is ever to be a revival of religion it must start here. Conversion must be more than the awakening of emotional and devotional sentiments. It must be intelligent, social, and corporate. Religious leaders have no right to preach about being born again unless they are concerned about where the people are first born. Piety that is frightened of the problems is puerile. Purity of heart in the man must be preceded by purity of blood in the child. The new citizenship will put into fearless practice a militant physical righteousness.

We cannot adequately deal with poverty and housing unless we defeat and destroy the drink traffic and all the social pests associated with it. We must make an original advance against this evil. Jesus placed a child in the midst and said, ' Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Science has demonstrated that alcohol poisons the blood of a child before it is born. Alcohol was distilled out of the liver of a still-born babe born of a drunken mother. A nation that thinks more of beer than bairns is doomed. Better have a millstone round our necks and be cast into the depth of the sea than injure one of these little ones. Associated with this is the cancer of gambling, which threatens to undermine both honesty and industry. If we appoint sanitary inspectors to protect the health of the people from small-pox and fevers, we also need some moral sanitary

inspectors to protect the soul of the nation from the degrading effects of the erotic novel, the sloppy film, and the type of newspaper that deals in the criminal and immoral aspects of life.

What is known as the Industrial Problem cannot be neglected with impunity by a Christian citizenship. If 'Capital' and 'Labour' perpetuate their crippling feuds, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' then material wealth will inflict more injury on modern society than did wild nature upon primitive man. The efforts to relieve the tension and soften the acerbity between contending parties have hitherto effected little. It is a change of spirit that is needed, from class jealousy and mistrust to mutuality and goodwill. We must not hesitate to scrap bad customs and discard obsolete methods. 'There is no wealth but life.' The human value according to Jesus must be placed at the centre. By it, the political, commercial, and industrial practices and institutions must be tested and judged. Capital is not a private right, to hold in pawn the welfare of the nation. Labour is not a commodity to be bought and sold, but a human skill to be exercised for human advancement. Money and morals cannot be divorced. What is economically unjust cannot be morally right. Economic integrity is part of moral integrity, and there cannot be one without the other. All industrial progress is really the contribution of the soul, and ought to be sacred.

'There was a time,' says Höffding, 'when religion went before the people like a pillar of fire. Now, alas, it has become mostly an ambulance brigade.' Many are asking: Will Christianity survive? It is only waiting for its opportunity. Waiting for the members of the Kingdom to bring in the New Heaven and the New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

TOM SYKES.

LET US THANK GOD :

For the inspiration and courage of all who have stood for freedom and justice, and nourished a spirit of brotherhood and goodwill.

For the deepening sense of human worth and the growing reverence for womanhood, and the increasing care for children.

For definite movements towards industrial and international peace, and for hopes of disarmament.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'St. George' (Gauntlet).

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be ;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive,
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,
To Thee our first-fruits give.

O, hearts are bruised and dead,
And homes are bare and cold,
And lambs, for whom the Shepherd bled,
Are straying from the fold !

To comfort and to bless,
To find a balm for woe,
To tend the lone and fatherless
Is angels' work below.

The captive to release,
To God the lost to bring,
To teach the way of life and peace,
It is a Christ-like thing.

And we believe Thy word,
Though dim our faith may be ;
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
We do it unto Thee.

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III

A NEW PURITANISM

The mental image aroused in the minds of many people by the mention of 'Puritanism' is not at all attractive. They see a company of sour-looking men and subdued women dressed in sombre grey, and obsessed by the fear that they may possibly enjoy life. It is assumed that this seriousness must be a pose, and therefore hypocritical. To those who take this view, Stiggins and Chadband are typical Puritans. Dr. Dibelius, in his study of *England*, credits Puritanism with certain good influences in the development of the English character, but he accuses Puritanism of being 'the bane of English culture,' and 'the parent of English cant.'

If this suggested a true picture, it would be impossible to justify the use of the word 'Puritanism' as descriptive of part of the vocation of a Christian. There are difficulties in the use of the word arising from the fact that it has a definite historic setting altogether different from anything associated with words like 'churchmanship' and 'citizenship.' It is only as we endeavour to catch the true emphasis and essential spirit of Puritanism, apart from these historic limitations, that we shall see it to stand for a vital part of the Christian life.

Let it be said, therefore, that we are not considering the ecclesiastical policy which belongs to the beginning of Puritanism in the sixteenth century. Neither are we discussing the attempt to establish the Kingdom of God by force. The unlovely hardness of later Puritanism, which has been so frequently caricatured, sprang out of this sincere but mistaken effort to force the whole nation under a strict rule. As J. R. Green so well points out, it was with the seeming fall of

Puritanism that its real victory began. Not even the orgy of the Restoration could destroy the deep effect of the Puritan influence in the hearts and consciences of men.

Putting aside mistakes and exaggerations which belong to the history of Puritanism, our concern is with the abiding significance of the Puritan witness. In other words, what was it that produced, not the caricature of a Chadband, but the reality of a John Milton? Professor Peabody has described this spiritual inheritance in three phrases: simplicity of life, loyalty to duty, and an intimate sense of the leadership of God.

The simplicity of the life of the Puritan has often been misunderstood. Turning to the earlier type, we do not see any rejection of the true and beautiful delights of life. The home of Colonel Hutchinson had its music, and even its dancing. John Milton wrote the *Masque of Comus* partly as a protest against the bigotry of those who could see no good in the stage. What the Puritan did say was that these things did not supply the real purpose of life. What he did avoid was ostentation in dress, prodigality in expenditure, and absorption in pleasure. He saw the tendency for these things to become ends in themselves. He adopted simplicity, in all the personal accompaniments of living, in order that he might reach out to larger and greater things.

The Puritan found this larger meaning of life in his sense of duty. He recognized a law of righteousness, finding voice in his conscience. We may describe it as stern, but we dare not suggest that it was mistaken. One of the charges brought against the Puritans is their neglect of the beautiful. The truth is, that what the Puritan rejected was the idea of beauty for its own sake. Dr. Forsyth once said, 'No man does justice to beauty till he feel the moral beauty of resisting beauty. There is something incomplete in artistic taste until it see . . . the beauty of Puritanism.' The

Puritan refused to admit that any realm of life could be without moral significance.

The sum and explanation of both his simplicity of life and his sense of duty was his acceptance of the leadership of God. As Professor Peabody says, 'The Puritan's faith may have been harsh, but it was bracing.' Every part of his life had relationship to the being and purpose of God. He demonstrated the truth that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and he endeavoured to make the whole of his life bear witness to the supremacy of God. In familiar words, the Puritan lived 'to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.'

It is easy to find parallels between the principles of the Puritans and the teaching of an Old Testament prophet like Amos, but that is not to say, as some have affirmed, that Puritanism finds no support in the New Testament. We hear Jesus saying, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' We find Jesus pointing out vividly and clearly the danger of wealth, and calling His disciples to a life of the utmost simplicity. The self-discipline of fasting is to be found, not only in the example of Jesus Himself, but in His evident expectation of His disciples. What is absent in Puritanism, judged from the standpoint of the New Testament, is the all-pervading and unifying spirit of love. The central criticism of the Puritanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is that in its interpretation of life it seemed to forget that love is the fulfilling of the law. If, therefore, the Puritan ideal has any validity as a part of the Christian vocation, it must be a Puritanism inspired by love.

Therein lies the essential difference between the Puritanism of the seventeenth century and the Methodism of the eighteenth. John Wesley was a true Puritan, and the very name 'Methodist' carried over that sense of discipline which was wrought out so

finely in Puritanism. But over all, and in all, is the love which is the very heart of the great evangel. The standard of life is a Christian perfection, which is, in John Wesley's own words, ' pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions.' Looking out upon a world of trouble and disorder and indulgence, Wesley said, ' Love is the never-failing remedy for all the ills of a disordered world.'

The life which the Christian was called to live under the impulse of this love was set out in a document, all too little read, entitled, *Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists.*[1] Here is, in clear and definite language, a New Puritanism. It must be remembered that these rules for Christian living are intended to be applied in fellowship. The Methodists are to ' watch over one another in love.' Behind the rules is a vivid conception of the family of God, and the sins to be avoided are those which make a breach in that family relationship.

There are three sections in these rules. The first may be described as the ' *Christian Negative.*' It sets out things to be avoided because they dishonour God, hurt others in the family of God, or impair mind and body which should be used in the service of God. The second section deals with the ' *Christian Positive,*' which means the doing of good of every possible kind to all sorts and conditions of men. The third section is a reminder that such a life cannot be lived without walking closely with God. So the Christian vocation includes the use of every means of worship and prayer, thought and devotion, in order that fellowship with God may be real and continuous.

In a final paragraph, John Wesley claims that these rules of life are such as we are taught of God to observe in His written word. There can be no doubt that

[1] See *The Methodist,* by Henry Carter, for a complete modern setting of these rules.

the claim is valid—that these rules do express the teaching of the New Testament concerning the way of life. There are certain archaic expressions and some regulations derived from conditions unknown to-day, but it is surprising how little needs to be altered, so exactly do they express, even for our own time, the spirit of a life of Christian love.

Wesley's advance upon Puritanism was deliberate. He did not abrogate the Puritan emphasis upon righteousness in all conditions and relations, but he made it clear that holiness of heart is the foundation of righteousness of life. This 'scriptural holiness' is perfect love to God and man. It is not what we achieve of ourselves, but what God can and will do in us.

The emphasis of thought and life to-day is certainly upon love as the distinctive Christian note. But what does not seem to be recognized is that, if this love is to find its full expression, it means a life disciplined along the lines of the Puritan ideal and the Methodist rules. A love that is merely a vague sentiment is not truly Christian. Sir Josiah Stamp is not mistaken when he holds up to ridicule the vague ideas of brotherhood, which are not more than a shallow sentiment—the belief that

> Just the art of being kind
> Is all the sad world needs.

We have been too vague and indeterminate in our understanding of love, just because we have left out its true and direct expression in an ordered and disciplined life. We do not want less love, but we do want that love governing all the words and actions. We need a New Puritanism.

It is of no use to hide the fact that this plea runs directly counter to much of the thought of to-day. Words like discipline, duty, denial, are utterly abhorrent. They suggest repression, and the idea of popular

psychology is that repression is always and entirely to be avoided. Expression is the key-word to-day. Self-expression and self-realization are the attractive ideas. The true psychological limitations of these ideas are forgotten, if they were ever known. Broadly speaking, this is an age of self-indulgence. This is not to accuse the present age of being worse than, or even as bad as, other ages, but it is to say that the main emphasis and the chief tendency are wrong. That the results of such indulgence are not immediately obvious is largely due to the fact, as Dr. Cyril Norwood puts it, that we are living on 'unearned capital, a capital earned by the Christian religion, and those who have lived their lives in that faith in the past.'

Even so, the results are sufficiently evident to create a deep concern in the minds of all who have any vision of life as God meant it to be. We can see the facts most strikingly in their broad social consequences. In the midst of financial strain, the two most flourishing concerns are the cinema industry and the drink traffic. This means a self-indulgence which is not corrected by any real sense of personal responsibility in the use of money. This is still further evident when consideration is given to the facts of gambling in all sections of the community. The passion for mere amusement not only absorbs the leisure of the week-days, but threatens to invade the quiet of Sunday to a still greater extent. The revolt against slums is neither as widespread nor as persistent as the actual facts would surely warrant. The attitude of many to the question of sex is disquieting. The general indifference to peace, and the failure to accept a definite personal responsibility for creating peace, is alarming.

In a community by no means Christian, such conditions are not altogether surprising. But what is the Christian witness in relation to this 'disordered world'? If there were a clear and unmistakable

expression of a Christian judgement, demonstrated in the lives of men and women, there would be more hope. Instead, we have confusion and uncertainty. Many whose Christian associations and spirit of Christian goodwill are never in question, speak and act as though many of these things were matters of comparative indifference. We have grown accustomed to such comments as : ' What harm is there in an occasional flutter if one can afford it ? '—' After all, it is the people who make the slums ! '—' We shall never get rid of war ; it is human nature.' This attitude involves a practical denial of the Christian vocation. Dr. Anderson Scott has recently pointed out that the hypocrisy which Jesus condemned in the Pharisees was largely a ' failure to think out the practical application of their religious principles in their relation with other men.' He adds, ' We should do well to define a hypocrite in our Lord's sense of the word as one who refuses the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the application of the principle of love to duty—remembering that the refusal is generally due to love of something else than God.'

It has become customary for us to soothe our consciences by looking to legislative action as the one solution. As long as the drink traffic can be dealt with by a Royal Commission, or international peace by a League of Nations, we are content. This is not said with any idea of decrying the legislative instrument—far from it ; but reliance upon it may easily be the way, not only to spiritual laziness, but to a practical denial of the personal discipline of Christian love. It is a mere truism that social change and legislative action are of little worth without individual renovation, but that is not the point. The conclusion is that the very need for change and the extent of that need will not be realized apart from the personal witness of those who live out relentlessly the life of christian love. Over

against the modern world we need the influence of a New Puritanism.

Can we put into few words some indication of what this New Puritanism may mean in the life of to-day? It really comes to this—that, in the Pauline phrase, we are 'called to be *saints*.' Again an unpopular word. It may be paraphrased as meaning 'set apart for the service of God.' Behind the fact of that consecration is the love which is revealed and given in Christ. It is a love so dominant in life that it must be interpreted in the whole of the activities and relationships of life. We are given to talk about discovering the mind of Christ for this generation. Surely this is not primarily an intellectual quest. Rather is it the guidance which the spirit of God waits to give when there is the will to know and to do. To secure the greatest effect upon the social life of the community we need the influence of lives so governed and disciplined by the love of God that they challenge everything which is alien to that love.

Any more detailed definition of this New Puritanism will have likeness to the rules set out by John Wesley. To begin with, we must of necessity take at their full value such words of Jesus as those which warn us against 'laying up treasure upon earth,' or which call us to 'take up our cross daily.' We shall reject all mere expedients and all compromises with the spirit of the world. Because we are governed by love, we shall avoid not only the things which are likely to hurt our own body, mind, or spirit, but those which are likely to hurt others through our influence. We shall know abstinence to be one of the privileges of love. Accepting with deep gratitude all gifts of God which make life beautiful and interesting and romantic, we shall desire to preserve that beauty by an adequate restraint, and we shall recognize the danger of these perfectly good things taking the place of that which is best. Brotherhood

will be to us, not a sentiment, but a fact governing our relationships in the whole round of human life. This will not only restrain us from hurting others, but lead us to do good in every possible way. Money will become to us a trust, never to be gained through another's loss, and never to be used merely selfishly. As 'citizens of the world' in a sense never dreamed of by the early Puritans or the early Methodists we shall be directed by that same love in all ways of international friendship and peace. To the end that we may not lose touch with God, or become insensitive to the guidance of His Spirit, we shall welcome all opportunities for private and corporate worship and devotion. The comparative quiet and freedom of Sunday will be to us a great privilege, not to be wasted or abused. With it all will be no sense of gloom or depression. We shall take up our cross gladly ; we shall fast in the atmosphere of intense joy ; we shall radiate a spirit of Christian merriment which can only come to those who live as God meant us to live.

Can there be any doubt about the effect of lives thus disciplined, ordered, restrained by that love which is the spirit of Christ? Is there any question about this being the Christian vocation? Still more is it not becoming increasingly clear that a Christianity thus revealing itself along the lines of the New Puritanism we have tried to describe is an immediate and urgent need? If, as would appear to be the case, the scientific and philosophic challenge to the Christian faith has, for the moment, spent itself, the ethical challenge is undoubtedly growing in intensity, and may be much more testing. There is the advantage that it calls for a practical answer. We move from the realm of reason to that of experience. The validity of Christianity is to be tried out, yet once again, in actual life, but in a life exacting and complicated as in no other age. Though the difficulties be greater, there are elements

of similarity with the circumstances which called forth the stern simplicity and unflinching loyalty of the Puritans. The situation is not unlike that which in a later century led the Methodists to live by rule. If in these days we who profess and call ourselves Christian, may be justly accused of comparative failure, is it not that we have regarded Christian experience as an emotional satisfaction instead of a discipline which directs every aspect of our life and every phase of our human relations? We shall be guilty of still more tragic failure if we suppose that this Christian discipline can be imposed on a cold life. It can only find its beginning and continuance in the New Testament experience described in the familiar words, 'Christ liveth in me.'

It might appear as though we were arguing for going back, if not to Puritanism, at least to early Methodism. This would be a false conclusion. The Christian vocation is ever new. The New Puritanism of John Wesley indicated a line of advance, and it is ours to travel on to a newer Puritanism. We must carry the love of Christ to richer and deeper expression in life. We do not go back to Christ; we go forward with Christ. The discipline may appear searching, and even painful. Most certainly it will be little short of agony if it is attempted as a merely external standard. But it can and will be the very joy of the Lord if it means, as it should, 'pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions.' The Christian vocation is imperfectly understood without such a Puritanism.

E. Benson Perkins.

LET US RECALL THE WORDS OF JESUS :

'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.'

A SILENT PRAYER :

Lord, I believe in Thee, help Thou mine unbelief. I love Thee, yet not with a perfect heart as I would. I long for Thee, yet not with my full strength. I trust in Thee, yet not with my whole mind. Accept my faith, my love, my longing to know and serve Thee, my trust in Thy power to help me, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AN ACT OF CONSECRATION :

O Lord Jesus, my Saviour and King, I venture humbly and with trembling, trusting in Thy strength, to dedicate my life to Thy service.

I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt ; rank me with whom Thou wilt ; put me to doing, put me to suffering ; let me be employed for Thee, or laid aside for Thee ; exalted for Thee, or brought low for Thee. Let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal. Accept of me in Thy mercy, and preserve me even unto Thy Heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

SILENCE.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'St. Michael.'

Lord, in the strength of grace,
With a glad heart and free,
Myself, my residue of days,
I consecrate to Thee.

Thy ransomed servant, I
Restore to Thee Thy own ;
And, from this moment, live or die
To serve my God alone.

BENEDICTION :

Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

IX

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES

CHAIRMAN : J. P. WILLIAMS, President of Local Preachers Mutual Aid Association

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HYMN : *Tune :* 'Dundee.'

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne ;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
To be exalted thus !
Worthy the Lamb ! our hearts reply ;
For He was slain for us.

Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine ;
And blessings, more than we can give,
Be, Lord, for ever Thine.

The whole creation join in one
To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

That they may be one. John xvii. 5–11, 20–23

SILENCE.

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

LET US join together in an Act of Thanksgiving for the divine leading towards Methodist Union, and in united prayer for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We worship Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou great Head of the Church. We call upon all that is within us to bless Thee for the sure signs of Thy presence amongst the Methodist people, as, meeting in Thy Name, they have sought to be bound together by Thy Spirit in the bond of perfectness, that is love, for all the services of Thy Kingdom. We humbly beseech Thee of Thy great goodness, O Lord, that the light and leading of that same Presence may be vouchsafed to all the councils of this people, whensoever and wheresoever they may be assembled. So grant that in the humble following of Thy Spirit, in mutual love and forbearance, in reverent discerning of Thy purpose in the raising up of our Methodist fathers, in establishing their work in this and other lands, we, Thy servants here present, seeking not our own, but the things which are Thine, may serve the speedy coming of Thy Kingdom in our own day and generation, to the glory of Thy Holy Name. Amen.

HYMN: *Tune :* 'Harwich.'

My God, I am Thine;
What a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my
Jesus is mine!
In the heavenly Lamb
Thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the
sound of His name.

True pleasures abound
In the rapturous sound;
And whoever hath found it hath
paradise found.
My Jesus to know,
And feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven
below.

Yet onward I haste
To the heavenly feast:
That, that is the fullness; but this is
the taste!
And this I shall prove,
Till with joy I remove
To the heaven of heavens in Jesus's
love.

I

BIBLE READING

I WANT to draw your attention to the importance of Bible reading. The subject divides itself into several sections. In the first place, public Bible reading. I deprecate cutting out one of the lessons for a children's address, or having only one lesson at night. It is the only opportunity the people have for hearing the Bible, and, if properly read, nothing can make so much for spiritual uplift. The lessons should be carefully chosen, and cover the whole field—Isaiah and the Psalms and the story of Naaman are not the whole Old Testament, nor Romans viii. the whole of St. Paul's Epistles. In this connexion I would plead for more Bible teaching by the pulpit—perhaps not on Sunday, though expository preaching is much to be preferred to topical preaching. But I am convinced that there is a scope on some week-day evening for intelligent expository preaching or teaching, in which our young people can get to know the real meaning of the books of the Bible.

This leads to my second point. Texts are a modern growth in the Church ; right enough in their places but with dangers. An isolated text, taken out of it, connexion, can have little value. A text as the summary of some purpose is a different thing. To make the Bible real to the modern mind we need to get at its meaning, and isolated texts will not do this save as useful mnemonics. We must remember that each book of the Bible has some definite purpose of its own—not to be confused with that of some other book, for the Bible is a library, not a book. Moreover, there is an order of development ; the early must not be confused with the

late, and one of the joys of proper Bible reading is to trace the slow growth of spiritual ideas until they reach their final expression in St. Paul and Christ. But this is a difficult task, in which the people need instruction if they are to succeed. For instance, Hosea, Micah, Jonah, and Amos are almost meaningless unless this is done ; if read in this way, they become part of the wonderful development of spiritual ideas. Illustrate from Jonah and Hosea.

Another point, especially for young people. Do not be frightened of modern thought as applied to the Bible. Believe me, the Bible is much more real to-day than it was fifty years ago, when it was looked at under what I will call the typewriter theory of inspiration. To-day we see that it is the record of the upward struggle of the human spirit, slowly developing, but ever mounting higher. Modern criticism has made the Bible more real, because it has brought it more into touch with human life and history. But the modern way of looking at the Bible needs the utmost intelligence if you are to get the best out of it. The old way in which one text was as good as another, and Leviticus of equal value with the Second Isaiah, was an easy way of looking at things. The modern way means study, diligence, and teaching. I appeal to you to read the Bible intelligently, prayerfully, with the best aids of modern thought that you can find, and the Bible will become to you, as to your fathers, though in a different way, through different channels, the revelation of God, and the stimulus of all that is best in your soul's life.

My last thought must be this. After all, the main purpose for which we read the Bible must be the spiritual growth of our souls. The Bible gives the soul its food ; without food we must wither and decay. To some extent, it is true, we have another food in hymns—not trashy, sentimental evanescent hymns, but hymns founded upon great Bible truths, as in those

of Charles Wesley's hymns, e.g. 'Wrestling Jacob,' not always suitable for public singing, but which can never be left out of any hymn-book, if only because they give to definite parts of the Bible a special spiritual value. The value of a good hymn lies in its experimental setting of some great Bible truth, but no stream can rise higher than its source, and the source of all that is best in experimental religion lies in the experience recorded in the Bible. Our fathers owed everything to two great factors, both of which are in danger to-day. The one was prayer ; the other the devotional reading of the Bible. In the quiet of their house they read the Book, waiting for God to speak to them, so that it should become His Word. So with us. Bring to bear all modern thought, and all modern means of access. But all these are valueless unless they lead us into the presence chamber of God, and as we read we hear the Lord speaking to us from the past, the vanished past which is yet the eternal present.

HERBERT B. WORKMAN.

OFFERTORY.

HYMN: *Tune:* 'Lux Eoi.'

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some celestial measure
Sung by ransomed hosts above;
O the vast, the boundless treasure
Of my Lord's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by Thine help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Take my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above!

II

FELLOWSHIP

1. Fellowship is the characteristic note of Methodism. The Methodist Church began in an atmosphere of warmth that was both human and divine. On that memorable twenty-fourth of May when John Wesley felt his 'heart strangely warmed' he was prophetic. Indeed, he was more than prophetic; he had found his way back to the original foundation—the one upon which Jesus Himself established His Church.

There is a short sentence in the Gospels that contains the golden secret of much of the Church's success: 'He chose twelve that they should be with Him.' *The Art of Living Together* is one of the most difficult to learn and to practise. All who accomplish it successfully ought to receive the diploma of the Kingdom. The other day I saw a new Beatitude: 'Blessed are they who are pleasant to live with.' It reminded me of the prayer of the little girl: 'O Lord, make all the bad people good and make all the good people nice.'

2. In the fellowship of the Church and the Kingdom the questions of creed, of social rank, of education, even of nationality, are always secondary and subordinate. It is the quality of the spirit, the attitude of life, that matters. Where you find men and women kindred in thought, seeking the same ideals, loving the same things, you have all the conditions for fellowship. Even love is not enough in itself. Love can be very selfish and narrow. Fellowship demands that love shall open out in sympathy—identity of aim, kinship that is full and complete. I am not unmindful of the great differences that divide some sections of the Church from the others, that separate them into opposite camps. And yet

what profound agreements exist below those differences. I call to mind one or two personal experiences. I had the privilege of attending the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne. We were a mixed lot in every sense of the word—all sections of organized Christianity excepting the Roman Catholic Church. Different nationalities, different languages, different creeds, different rituals. In one small sub-committee I found myself next to the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Greek Church—a wonderful-looking old gentleman with long hair and long skirts. Our very hymn-books were printed in several different languages. And yet when we sang 'All hail the power of Jesu's Name' to the same tune, but each man in his own tongue wherein he was born, there was no discord: there was a sense of unity and of fellowship as close and as deep as anything I have known.

I once spent an afternoon with a Roman Catholic priest—a most delightful experience. We talked without reserve about the deep things of the Spirit. There was no sense of distance between us. We had left all the small, surface questions of theology and of ritual far behind. It was Christian fellowship deep, warm, and close. As we shook hands on parting, he said, 'Why should we hate each other because we think differently?' Why indeed!

When you sing that great hymn of St. Bernard's that belongs to the universal Church—

> Jesus, the very thought of Thee
> With sweetness fills my breast—

you forget all the theological differences that divide you. You forget that he belonged to another century, to another nation, to another Church. You are caught up in a great Christian fellowship.

3. That is the thing that distinguishes Jesus Christ

from every other teacher. He opens His Kingdom to all. He utterly ignores all distinctions of rank, nationality, culture, age, clime. No one is shut out of Christ's Kingdom because he is poor, or ignorant, or of humble birth. No question is asked as to a man's circumstances. The only question that matters is that of a man's spirit—does he seek the best things, is he in love with Jesus Christ? The golden secret of fellowship is to be sought and found within, not without: 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.' When the Christian Church has learned this great lesson, when she practises it, the rosy light of the millennium will be seen on the sky-line:

> The fellowship of kindred minds
> Is like to that above.

4. Methodism has been divinely guided in laying the emphasis upon this note. The desire for fellowship is almost universal. It is only here and there you find a poor soul that desires to live in a watertight compartment. For the most part we crave fellowship, we seek the company of others. Many a youth begins to frequent the public-house, not because he has the appetite for alcohol, but because he seeks the society of his friends and companions. If we could make Christian fellowship attractive and fascinating we should solve the great problem of the Church.

In early Methodism there was a buoyancy, an exhilaration about its fellowship that has almost disappeared. The light has grown dim. The music has passed into the minor key. Some time ago I spent half an hour with one of the hymn-books of early Methodism. It was used in the pioneer days. There may not have been much poetry in the verses, but there was a lilt and a cadence and a momentum that was irresistible. Take this verse:

My soul's full of glory
Which inspires my tonge.
Could I meet with an angel
I'd sing him a song.

For sheer audacity that would be hard to beat. To offer to teach an angel how to sing would be like teaching Shakespeare to write or Bradman to play cricket. We have lost that note of exhilaration and of buoyancy. We have grown anxious and careful about many things. Twenty years ago, Dan Crawford, that devoted and blithe missionary, asked, 'Why have you English people lost your smile?' 'It is the price we pay for civilization,' some one answered. 'Ah!' said Crawford, 'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own smile.' In some way we must get back the message of *Assurance* into our fellowship. Fellowship has been the life-centre of Methodism. The establishment of the Society Class Meeting was more than a stroke of genius. It was providential. It was in the line of the divine purpose. It has been one of the chief sources of our strength. Other Churches have envied us. Other Churches have copied us. It will be a fatal mistake if we let it slip. I am not greatly concerned about the form of the fellowship. It may, it does, require adaptation to the changing conditions of society. There can be no question as to its need and its value.

In the fellowship of the Methodist Church there is no room for parties and cliques. Methodism should be a great and glorious family, where every variety of talent and endowment may be found, but where all can flourish in the atmosphere of love. There is a fellowship that is *Exclusive*: 'You are not in our set!' It picks out a few select spirits; with rigid exclusiveness it limits its privileges to these. But Christian fellowship is comprehensive and inclusive. Jesus Christ does not desire that all His loved ones should be of the

same pattern. He does not seek uniformity, but unity ; not an outward sameness, but an inward kinship. He chose Peter to be an apostle. But he chose only one Peter. There were also Andrew and John. In one of Paul's letters he speaks about 'my fellow labourers whose names are written in the Book of Life.' What glorious personalities are hidden behind that anonymous phrase ! Thank God for the commonplace people. They are a multitude no man can number. It will be a sad day for Methodism should she ever discriminate between different social grades—first, second, and third ! The Society class that contributed most to the formation of my Christian character when I was a youth was attended by forty or fifty persons of all ages and of all stations in life. The only reason why the fellowship meeting has died out is because it had ceased to be a living thing. That may sound Irish. It is profoundly true. Where you have a leadership that is intelligent and devoted, where the form of the meeting has been adapted to modern conditions, it has responded to a real need. It has been a great inspiration. It is still one of the chief weapons in our armoury.

5. I am anxious about the spirit of fellowship. It is one of the conditions to a successful Church. In a large Church I know there were two distinct congregations—one that worshipped in the body of the building and the other in the gallery. I knew persons who had occupied pews in the gallery for twenty years who had never exchanged a word with some who sat downstairs. They were absolute strangers to each other.

In all helpful fellowship there will be nothing that is merely formal and rigid. Indeed, spontaneity and variety will be the key-notes. Nothing can destroy interest like monotony. There are few things that can be more deadly dull than some Methodist class meetings. The same persons with the same look upon their

faces, the same form of words upon their lips, the same tone of voice ! It is like the constant dropping of water. It can be maddening. It is that type of meeting that has led to the decay of the fellowship meeting and to the disregard in which it is so often held. Fellowship that is going to be of real worth must be a *living thing*. And the one fact about life is its endless variety, its surprises, its quality of unexpectedness. I can hear the thrill of wonder in the voices of that crowd that said, 'We never saw it on this fashion.' It is a pity we have failed to learn this lesson, because it is given such prominence in the Gospel story. 'After this He appeared to them . . . in another form.' He is always doing that. The same Jesus ! The same Spirit ! The same living, glorious fact, but endless manifestations. Fellowship with Him must reflect something of this quality if it is to be an accurate witness.

6. Our fellowship must be more of a *quest* than an organization. We are learners and seekers. There is the unceasing expansion of life. New landscapes. New horizons. New interests. New sympathies. Life is continually opening out in new colours. The *Group Method* has helped to solve the problem for many. Some of our young people have found spiritual treasure along this road. It has proved to be the school in which they have learned the great lessons of the Christian life, and have won some of the graces of the Christian character. They have found *vision*—the revelation of a definite task ! They have found *strength*—endowment for personal service ! They have found *faith* for the dark days and the rough roads. It is not too much to say that all the Christian graces may be learned in this school of fellowship. Tennyson has one pregnant line that sums up the spiritual results of fellowship : 'The faith of all makes strong the faith of each.'

Of course, fellowship with each other is only the

outward and visible sign of our fellowship with Him who is our Lord and Master. It is our living relation to Him that will give life and value to our quest. There are gracious personalities to whom you are always drawn. You feel an instinctive craving for their society, their companionship. You cannot see enough of them. They have a charm, a winsomeness, that is irresistible and inexhaustible. There is no one who possesses this quality to the degree found in Jesus Christ. It was no idle boast : 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' He has done it all down the centuries. He is doing it still. The person who has seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ can never be happy to be separated from Him. He will seek His society as the lover seeks the one he loves. The solid basis of all Christian fellowship is personal loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ—love for Him. An old saint who knew her Bible by heart began to lose her memory. One great text remained clear and tenacious : 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' She grew worse, and lost part of the verse. She could only recall 'that which I have committed unto Him.' During the last few days she hovered on the border-line ; feebleness increased. Loved ones leant over her as they saw her lips moving, thinking she might be asking for something. Time after time they heard the same word —'Him—Him—Him!' She had lost all her Bible but that one word. Nay! In that one word she had all the Bible—the secret of fellowship. D. L. Moody tells the story of one Saturday morning. He was working at his desk in the study. He was preparing his message for the following day. Suddenly the door was opened, and in walked his little five-year-old son. The great evangelist was anxious to concentrate upon his work, and so, lifting up his head, he said, 'Now

what do you want?' And, with a delightful disregard of grammar, the child said, 'I don't want nothing. I only want to be where you are.' That is the supreme end of Christian fellowship. We want only to be where He is, to hear His voice, to know His will, to share His companionship.

> And if our fellowship below
> In Jesus be so sweet,
> What heights of rapture shall we know
> When round His throne we meet.

W. Musson Kelley.

HYMN : *Tune :* 'St. George' (Elvey).

See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesu's love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth He came;
Kindled in some hearts it is:
O that all might catch the flame,
All partake the glorious bliss!

When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His day:
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way;
More and more it spreads and grows
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.

Sons of God, your Saviour praise!
He the door hath opened wide;
He hath given the word of grace,
Jesu's word is glorified;
Jesus, mighty to redeem,
He alone the work hath wrought;
Worthy is the work of Him,
Him who spake a world from nought.

Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies,
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land:
Lo! the promise of a shower
Drops already from above;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the Spirit of His love!

III

CORPORATE PRAYER

Our Lord called the Temple the House of Prayer ; it had been called this since the time of Isaiah. By this name our Christian sanctuaries are still known ; our churches are houses of prayer. Any consideration, therefore, of the subject of corporate prayer must take into account the place which prayer has in the regular worship of the Church. Let any minister or local preacher analyse the service he took last Sunday morning or evening and he will probably find that three out of the five hymns which were sung were prayers ; maybe all the five were prayers. If he read a Psalm, that also, in all likelihood, was a prayer. Then there were the two prayers he offered and the benediction. In the end he is probably astonished to find that a large part of the service was corporate prayer.

In much that is said and written about corporate prayer it is not sufficiently recognized that the greater part of our worship is generally united prayer. ' Jesu, Lover of my soul,' ' Rock of ages,' ' Abide with me,' ' Sun of my soul,' and scores of other much-loved hymns are no less prayers because they are sung, and quite half the Psalms are prayers, even though they are chanted by the worshippers standing instead of being quietly said by the petitioners on their knees.

Corporate prayer has, therefore, a wider significance than is generally given to it ; it is an essential part of every act of communal worship. Those of us who have the responsibility and privilege of conducting such worship must never lose sight of the fact that often during the course of the service men and women are joining with us in praying for cleansing, for faith, for

courage, for vision, and for a fuller enjoyment of God ; they are praying as the hymns are sung, as the Scriptures are read, as well as by the method we commonly speak of as prayer : when we say, ' Let us pray.'

Our worship, then, being largely an act of corporate prayer, we might well lay to heart the counsel of George Herbert to ' The Parson Praying.' ' The Country Parson when he is to read divine services composeth himself to all possible reverence, lifting up his heart and hands and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty and unfeigned devotion. This he doth, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the majesty of God, before whom he then presents himself ; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole congregation, whose sins he then bears, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar to be bathed and washed in the sacred laver of Christ's blood. Secondly, as this is the true reason of his inward fear ; so he is content to express this outwardly to the utmost of his power ; that being first affected himself, he may affect also his people, knowing that no sermon moves them so much to reverence, which they forget again when they come to pray, as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying. Accordingly his voice is humble, his words treatable and slow, yet not so slow neither as to let the fervency of the supplicant hang and die between speaking, but with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his duty.'

So when we meet together for worship we meet primarily to pray. Prayer, being the heart and soul of religion, must have the greatest place in all our acts of communal worship. And it is the part of our worship which is most calculated to arouse penitence, awaken faith, inspire courage, and lead the soul into closer fellowship with God.

But when we talk of corporate prayer we usually

mean the prayer meeting ; we mean group prayer, when Christian people gather and several offer audible petitions for help, guidance, and blessing. Until a comparatively recent date the Sunday evening prayer meeting was held as regularly as the service it followed. It was interrupted only on Communion Sunday. There would have been a glaring omission in the notices which did not contain the words, ' A prayer meeting will be held at the close of this service.' But a decline began, and it was an ominous sign when the notice was amended to, ' A short prayer meeting will be held at the close of this service.' The altered form was intended to arrest the decline ; it was an inducement to the worshippers to remain, by assuring the elders that they would not long be kept from their firesides, nor would the younger members be long delayed from taking their evening walk. The descent was rather rapid ; from a short meeting to none at all was a speedy process.

I am not unmindful that some churches still have their Sunday evening prayer meeting, but that many churches have given them up is beyond dispute. The practice has never been common among other Free Church communities ; the Sunday evening prayer meeting after the first service has been, I believe, almost entirely a Methodist institution. And it has also to be borne in mind that a large part of the congregation invariably left at the end of the first service. It would not be true to say that those who left were the least spiritually minded part of the congregation, and that those who remained were the most earnest and prayerful people in the church. These rough and ready generalizations cannot be sustained.

In most instances the week-day prayer meeting is not a flourishing institution, if the criterion be the numbers that attend. The efficacy of prayer does not depend on the number of those who pray. But for

some reason meetings held solely for the purpose of prayer are not as a rule largely attended. Can we find the reasons for this? Every minister could tell of godly and devout people who have found it impossible to give utterance to their deepest spiritual desires in audible prayer. They cannot emulate the ease that others show in public prayer. One of the saintliest men I ever knew made the attempt once in a prayer meeting I was conducting. I was urging those present not to be afraid to pray, and this good man tried to offer up a public prayer. But words simply would not come to his lips, and nervous prostration, unfitting him for his work for several days, followed this effort he had made to take part in the meeting. Audible prayer is a special gift, and Providence has apparently denied it to some very estimable people. Let us never think that those who can pray publicly are farther on in the religious life than those who cannot.

Has our deeper knowledge of the nature of prayer anything to do with the decline of the prayer meeting? Not with the decline of prayer, but the prayer meeting. Prayer is an irrepressible inner necessity to a religious man. 'In its utterance,' says Heiler, 'we apprehend the deepest and most intimate impulses of the pious soul.' Those who have read the *Life of Alexander Whyte* (one of the greatest of modern biographies, in my judgement) will recall a letter Whyte wrote to a young minister who asked him whether he advised preparation of prayer for the pulpit. Whyte gave the startling reply, 'Certainly, I do; but public prayer is an unnatural act.' Whyte elaborated this in one of his most searching sermons, The Secret Burden, and his description of the minister in his public prayers finds an echo in many a minister's heart.

'There it is,' says Whyte, 'written all over our open Bible so that he who runs may read it, the sure and certain blessedness of prayer *apart*, the immediate and

the immense advantage and privilege of private prayer. But not only is all that written all over both the Old Testament and the New ; it is illustrated and enforced on us out of our own experience every day. Take your minister and yourselves in proof and in illustration of this. As soon as the church bells stop ringing on the Sabbath morning, your ministers must immediately begin to pray openly and before men, whether they are prepared or not ; whether they are in the proper spirit or no ; and whether they have recovered their lost sight and lost hold of God that morning or no. It is expected of them that, as soon as the opening Psalm is sung, the pulpit should begin to pray.

'And you get—more or less—every Sabbath morning from the pulpit what you pay your seat for, and demand of us in return. You get a few well-repeated liturgical passages. You get a few well-selected passages out of the Psalms. And then a promise or two taken out of the prophets and apostles, and all artistically wound up with a few words of doxology. But all that, four or five times every Sabbath day, is not prayer. All that is a certain open and public acknowledgement and tribute to the House of Prayer, and to the Day of Prayer ; but nobody with an ounce of sense or spirit ever supposes that *that* is prayer.'

This is an exaggeration, of course. Whyte had the dramatic instinct to an unusual degree, and he often said things which could not stand the test of calm judgement. Many of his hearers said that his pulpit prayers were a revelation ; their humility, their unexpectedness, the pleading note in them, led all his congregation who had the power to follow into a place apart.

But of the immense and incomparable opportunity and advantage of private prayer over public prayer there can be no question. Whyte instances the confession of sin, and rightly says that it is impossible for us to discover and lay bare and to put the proper words

and feelings upon our sin and upon ourselves in public prayer. We should do ourselves no good, and we should do all who hear us real harm. Particularity is the very life-blood of all true and prevailing prayer, but we dare not take particular instances of our daily sinfulness and corruption of heart and utter them in public ; it would be insufferable and unpardonable. And the same holds true of intercessory prayer. It would be a presumption to pray for men in public as we are permitted and enabled and commanded to pray for them in private. ' In intercessory prayer in public, particulars and instances, and actual persons, and special and peculiar cases, are absolutely impracticable and impossible. You simply dare not pray, in public, for other men, any more than for yourself, as they need to be prayed for. You would be arrested and imprisoned under the law of libel if you did it.'

It is surely not without significance that nearly all the references to our Lord's prayers mention Him as praying in solitude and seclusion. In His case it is ' the flight of the lonely one to the Only One.' Even the prayers He offered which others heard, as on the cross, were not public prayers, but private and personal. We have no instance of Jesus praying in response to a conviction that prayer is a duty which should be faithfully observed. His prayers were spontaneous, arising out of some special need ; never rhetorical, as ours so often are, never formal.

I suggest that this deeper conception of prayer as something so intensely personal may have had something to do with the decline of the particular kind of prayer meeting which was at one time popular with us. It is a costly thing to pray. ' By terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation.' May it not be because of our ever-deepening sensitiveness of what a great and solemn thing righteousness is that we feel we must seek the desire of it in our

own private communion with God rather than in public petition?

Yet no Christian can question the need and the blessedness of corporate prayer. We are in line with the practice of the Early Church when we meet together for united prayer. In one of the earliest recorded prayer meetings of the apostles' days we read that 'when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.' That testimony to the power of corporate prayer does not stand alone. Has any visitation of power and gladness and victory ever come to the Church in any age when the Church has neglected the fellowship of prayer? Writing in 1787, Wesley comments on going to a certain place. 'Finding a remarkable deadness, I inquired what were the reasons of it. Among others I found that prayer meetings were entirely given up. What wonder if all the people were grown dead as stones.' A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. A prayerless Church is a powerless Church.

No doubt the Sunday evening prayer meeting presents problems. Who has not felt the unreality of many of the petitions, our own among the rest? And how paralysing have been the frequent silences, and the appeals for prayer which have met with no response, until it has seemed to the leader necessary to bring the meeting to a summary close. But, on the other hand, how many have found in this meeting the priceless opportunity of making their decision for Christ. It was at an ordinary Sunday evening prayer meeting that, as a boy of fifteen, I gave my heart to God. Thousands of ministers and other Church workers would give a similar testimony. It is worth our most earnest consideration whether by dispensing with this meeting we have not robbed many of the opportunity of

deciding for Christ. The comparative smallness of the meeting has often helped in this vital matter. In large companies people of shy and timid nature—and most young people are of this character in matters that concern them most—would find it more difficult to make an open confession of their need.

Let us boldly experiment in the matter of corporate prayer. It cannot be denied that we have been too conservative in our methods. Might not the last quarter of an hour on a Sunday evening occasionally be given solely to directed prayer? Subjects for prayer might be indicated from the pulpit, a brief period of silence following each announcement. I have sometimes arranged beforehand for two or three suitable persons to pray after the sermon, telling them what I was going to preach about. This would not suit all congregations, but it would be quite helpful and acceptable to others. But whether by reviving the old-time prayer meeting, or by small groups of Christians meeting at stated times for prayer, or by changing the week-night service definitely into a meeting for prayer, or by affording the congregation larger opportunities for corporate prayer in public worship, united prayer must be restored to its rightful place in church life.

If the sense of need is strong within us we shall feel we *must* pray. If we are conscious of a common helplessness, a common danger, we shall pray. That is what led people to pray during the war years. The sense of need was so strong that aid was sought from God, material help being recognized as insufficient for so dire a peril. When the Church has a sense of helplessness in face of her vast problems at home and overseas; when she is conscious that not by might nor by power, not by learning or wealth, can she capture the world for her Lord—then she will begin to pray. The Church will not pray until she is more humble and

contrite. Charles Wesley was right when he asked Methodists to sing :

> Of all Thy gifts we ask but one,
> We ask the constant power to pray.

Do we fail here ? The power will come when we feel there is something lacking in us and lacking in the whole Church.

ARTHUR E. J. COSSON.

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